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Tañamor settles for silver medal

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South Korean firm keen on nuclear plant in RP

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Policemen find 8 skeletal remains in Davao mass grave

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Dollywood: Piolo-Sam's exposé may be hearsay

Jammers cut off cell phone blabbers

SAN FRANCISCO—...this afternoon in early September, an architect boarded his commuter train and became a cell phone vigilante. He set down next to a...

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, November 5, 2007 ++ 12 sections | Vol. 21 / No. 126 P18 www.inquirer.net

Fairy-tale ending eludes Filipino twins

SCARSDALE, NEW YORK—IT HAS ALL THE trappings of a Cinderella story.

Carl and Dianne Aguirre, unpronounced Filipino teens comprised at the top of their heads, arrived in New York in 2002, sick and malnourished, and after a series of death-defying operations, arrive just late one night on separate gurneys—fragile, isolated

GMA, De Venecia affirm Lakas unity

By Christine O. Avendaño and Christian V. Esguerra

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo yesterday said Lakas leaders had agreed not to allow "small hairs" to rock party unity, and other Lakas officials sought to finally put down reports that Malacañang would move to unseat Speaker Jose de Venecia.

"The party's top guns—Ma'am Arroyo, De Venecia and former President Fidel V. Ramos, chairman—met with about a dozen other Lakas leaders on Saturday night to try and patch up rifts in the party leadership ahead of the reopening of the 14th Congress today after weeks of recess.

In a statement, Ms Arroyo said it was the sentiment of the party leaders that teamwork and unity "should always prevail and not allow small hairs to get in the way of staying as one family and fulfilling our hopes for the people."

"Leadership controversies such as the [impeachment] shall be put to an end," she said, apparently alluding to recent infighting in the House of Representatives over the Speaker's post.

House leader Rep. Prospero Nograles of Davao City reportedly resigned as a result against De Venecia. "The only major change possible in the House is probably the cabinet at the lunch hanger of congressmen—the food ought to be better," he said in a text message.

Majority leader Arthur Defensor told the Inquirer: "Unfortunately for those who want to see

SURROUNDED by her legislative allies, President Macapagal-Arroyo sits between Speaker Jose de Venecia and former President Fidel V. Ramos during a caucus on Saturday in Malacañang.

Ayala: Blast not from gas

Glorietta owner tells PNP: Probe other angles

By DJ Yap

AYALA LAND INC. YESterday refuted the theory that a buildup of methane gas and diesel fumes triggered the Oct. 19 explosion at Glorietta 2, citing the findings of its own foreign consultants that contradicted those of the police.

Ali, owner of Glorietta mall, suggested that the police abandon the "primary hypothesis" that a combination of methane gas from the sump pits and fumes from the diesel tank in the basement may have caused the blast.

Jaime Ayala, Ali president and chief executive officer, said the gas buildup theory proffered by the police was "highly unlikely" in light of the conditions in the basement before the blast.

"We, as Pedro Lopez, really look into other angles to find out what happened," Ayala said at a joint conference at Intercontinental Hotel Manila. "We all feel the need to explore other possibilities of this point in time."

But Ayala refused to say if bomb might have caused the blast, which killed 11 people and in-

[ABOVE] Ayala, president of Ayala Land Inc., which owns the Glorietta, explains to journalists the findings of a company-hired group of foreign experts on the Oct. 19 explosion at the malls in Makati City.

Little outrage over pardon can be trouble for GMA

By Amando Doronila

IT'S NOT CLEAR IF THE POOR are happy over the absolute pardon granted to former President Joseph Estrada. It is even less clear if they consider the pardon the beginning of a new era of a shift to the flow of resources to poverty amelioration programs under an administration that basks in the glow of humanitarianism with the clemency grant.

The urban poor have been sending mixed signals that don't indicate approval or disapproval.

ANALYSIS

In his first visit to two of the poorest urban ghettoes in Metro Manila—Tondo and Sta. Mesa Heights—since his release from detention last week, an affable crowd greeted Estrada, chanting "Erap pa rin (We are still for Erap)." Some waved placards, saying "Erap our pastry."

This echoed Estrada's prosecution of numerous cases when he told supporters at San Juan City Hall last week following his release, "I may have committed mistakes in my career in public service, but I assure you that corruption is not one of them."

If President Macapagal-Arroyo had wanted the ghosts of Marcos Manila, especially together with the suspicious Ulay Gatchalian Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, after granting the pardon, she would have found out for herself what they meant when they didn't respond to Estrada's call that they applaud her benevolence in freeing his friend.

Artists urged to condemn 'indignity' to NPC mural

By TJ Burgonio

THE "BASTARDIZATION" OF A mural at the National Press Club (NPC) has drawn condemnation from an art critic and a visual artist, and prompted calls for artists to band together to prevent the act.

"I was shocked by the indignity done to the artwork. It was an offensive act," art critic Ed Reyes said.

Reyes said the NPC had no right to alter the mural painted by the Neo-Angono Artists Collective.

"I don't think it can be tampered with without the permission of the artist. Only the artist can touch, retouch a work of art ... it needs of art is sacred, sacrosanct. It must not be touched," he said.

National Artist Abdulmari Imao Calmeyan agreed with the Angono artists that the alterations to their mural were a form of censorship.

"If you treat an artist enough to commission him to do a painting, you have to respect what he does. Such if any alterations need to be done, the artist should first be consulted or, better yet, leave it to the artist to do the changes, if he agrees," Calmeyan said in an e-mailed statement.

"It is ironic that the subject of the NPC mural is press freedom when in fact the mural's intellec-

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Pakistan opposition leaders arrested

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—DOzens of detained leaders of Pakistan's opposition figures and lawyers yesterday as military ruler President Pervez Musharraf tried to stifle the outcry over his imposition of a state of emergency.

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said national elections due in January, might be rescheduled because of General Musharraf's decision on Saturday to announce emergency rule, which was condemned by the United States and other Western allies.

MUSHARRAF speaks on TV after imposing emergency rule. AFP

"We are committed to making sure that elections are held and that democracy process flourishes in Pakistan," Aziz told a news conference. "In a result of what has happened there would be some timing differences but [re-election has been made."

He said the emergency will last for as short a period as possible, adding that 400-500 people had been detained.

Among those detained were Javed Hashmi, the acting president of the party of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and Aitzaz Ahsan, chair of the Independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

"Musharraf usurped the independence of the judiciary by arresting the country's chief justice and removing other judges just to save his own illegitimate rule, but he cannot survive against the people's outrage," Hashmi told reporters as he was led away with 10 aides to the cantonment of Multan.

Attorney General Malik Mohammad Qayyum denied claims

A PARAMILITARY soldier guards the Supreme Court building in Karachi. REUTERS

6 find hope at Quezon Memorial

By Jeannette I. Andrade

FOR THE PEOPLE, THE QUEzon Memorial Circle is more than a park smack in the middle of busy, exhaust-choked Elliptical Road in Quezon City. Thanks to the kindness of strangers, it is a place of hope and new beginnings.

A simple admission to a social worker of Child Hope Asia Philippines that they had undergo self-pity in the path changed the lives of Jeffrey and Bernard, [illegible] and [illegible]

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

P64,265,223.60

GMA bats for laws on renewable energy

By Christine O. Avendaño

WITH OIL PRICES SURGING TO RECORD highs, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday called on Congress to pass legislation that would help the country deal with the problem by reducing it less reliant on imported fuel.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Arroyo was asking Congress "to pass urgently legislation on the development and promotion of renewable energy sources."

Bunye said the President was seeking the passage of such legislation after the recently unveiled Shell's launch of compressed natural gas (CNG) stations.

Ms Arroyo cited Shell's move as a "significant step toward reducing the country's dependence on imported fuel while protecting the environment."

Last week, Malacañang appealed to the public to help the government deal with runaway oil prices by conserving energy and supporting its efforts to find and develop alternative energy sources.

The price of oil in the global market hit record levels last week and analysts warned that major economies like the Philippines would be affected.

On Friday, oil prices shot to record closing highs on concern about the weak US dollar and tight global energy supplies heading into the northern hemisphere winter.

New York's main oil futures contract, light sweet crude for delivery in December, soared $1.40 to a record closing high of $95.98 a barrel.

On Thursday, a barrel of light sweet crude soared to $96.05, close to its absolute record of $96.24 struck the prior day.

In London Friday, Brent North Sea crude for December delivery for the first time breached the $92 level, settling $2.36 higher at $92.08 a barrel.

"It is clear that the market has $100 a barrel in its sights and this landmark is set to be breached before yearend," said Bank of Ireland analyst Ned Davis.

Early last week, oil prices soared to alarming heights as a result of troubling developments in the United States, the world's biggest energy consumer.

The market was also roiled by geopolitical tensions between Turkey and rivals in northern Iraq.

Since the start of October, New York crude has gained approximately $13 in value and London Brent almost $12.

Industry experts are watching global energy inventories because these are fearful of a supply crunch during the northern hemisphere winter months, when demand for heating fuel hits a peak. With an AFP report

Bedol not abducted, in hiding, say police

Wife saw him leaving with 4 armed men

By Nikko Dizon

WAS WANTED ELECTION official Lintang Bedol abducted or is he just in hiding?

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, commander of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said yesterday he believed Bedol was in hiding, laying in ambush.

According to the presidential election supervisor's wife, Radiyah Bedol, she last saw her husband in the early hours of Oct. 28, wearing a white T-shirt and denim jeans and talking to four armed men in front of their house in Cotabato City.

She told police, who had come to serve a summons for his arrest on Oct. 23, that Bedol insisted the men's entitle and has not been heard from since.

"There was an report that he was abducted," Goltiao told the Inquirer in a text message. The regional police chief said police were intensifying their "tracking operations" to find Bedol, who was sentenced by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to serve six months in prison for indecent campaign after he failed to appear and explain the erasing of 16 original certificates of canvass from 22 towns in Maguindanao during the May 15 midterm elections.

Bedol was cited for contempt in August but was not on hall. The seven arrest order since the Comelec denied his motion for reconsideration.

One of Bedol's trusted lieutenants who asked not to be identified, said the heavens that Bedol's family and friends could not categorically say if the poll official was indeed missing or he simply went away.

Even now, the aide said, no one has received any word from Bedol.

The aide said that even Bedol's former Comelec boss, Virgilio "Garci" Garcillano, who himself had disappeared purportedly to escape threats on his life two years ago, was getting worried.

Meanwhile, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the failure of the Comelec and the police to arrest Bedol bolstered suspicions that he was being protected by "powerful political forces."

"Your guess is as good as mine. Bedol has apparently gone true fading. Whether or not (President) Gloria (Macapagal-Arroyo) has a hand in it, only God knows," he said.

"What is certain is that the Comelec cannot implement its order to jail Bedol even for six short months. Is this how feeble the Comelec has become?" he said.

Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, who ran under the administration ticket Team Unity, edged out Genuine Opposition candidates and Pimentel's son, lawyer Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, for the 6th and 12th slot after the ruling Maguindanao certificates of canvass were "reconstructed" and restructured.

Pimentel said the Comelec must find out if Bedol and did not pursue the investigation into his involvement in allegedly tampering with the results of the Maguindanao-contested elections.

The poll body had found the results "statistically improbable" since all 11 opposition candidates and several independent candidates received no votes in the entire province. In the controversial Maguindanao tally, the administration scored a landslide victory for its 12 candidates.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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NEGROS prelate, others hit Erap pardon /A6

BORACAY wants to get MMDA's Bayani as consultant /A6

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Soldiers kill suspected Abu member

PHILIPPINE ARMY SOLDIERS fatally shot a suspected Muslim militant wanted for kidnappings, after he pulled out a pistol as they approached him in Basilan, an army spokesman said Saturday.

The soldiers spotted Jamal Tolh in remote Maluso township on Basilan island and a group of special forces was approaching him on Saturday when he pulled out the weapon, prompting the soldiers to shoot and kill him, said regional commander Brig. Gen. Ruperto Pabilona.

Tolh allegedly was a follower of the late Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani and was wanted by authorities for a string of kidnappings in Mindanao.

The military had offered a reward of P350,000 for Tolh's capture, Cruz told reporters.

The coastal township of Maluso in Basilan used to be a key stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf, which has alleged links to the al-Qaida international terror network of Osama bin Laden and has been blacklisted by Washington as a terrorist organization.

US-backed offensives that started in 2002 have severely set back the group. Owing many of its members to abandon Muslim and other Basilan lairs, its leader, Janjalani, was killed by Philippine Marines in a clash on Jolo island last year.

The Abu Sayyaf reportedly has more than 500 armed members scattered in Basilan and near by Jolo, from a peak of more than 1,000 guerrillas in early 2000, the military said. AP

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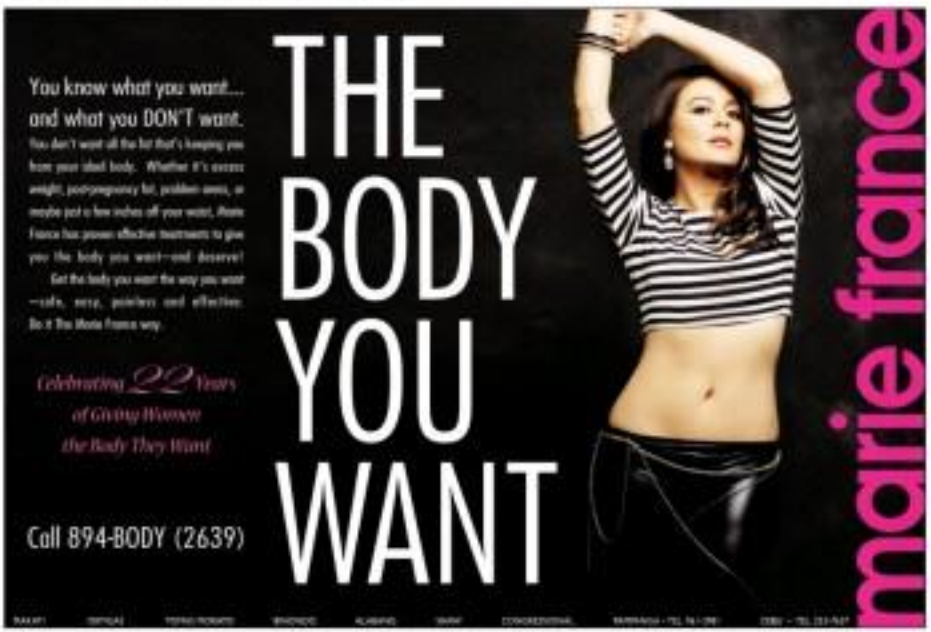

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Search for mass graves in Davao yields 8 remains

By Dennis Jay Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

STA. CRUZ, DAVAO DEL SUR—The police are trying to locate seven of mass graves in a remote village here where victims of an Internal purge in the rebel communist movement are said to have been buried more than two decades ago.

As of Saturday night, at least eight skeletal remains had been unearthed in the village of Sinaguitan.

The local police and Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) led a team of investigators and members of the local government in looking for several grave sites in the area, formerly a stronghold of the New People's Army.

Former NPA rebels and regular persons provided authorities information on the location of the mass graves.

Supt. Francisco Villaverones, chief of the police's Intelligence division in Southern Mindanao, said they were trying to excavate at least 30 remains that their sources identified.

"But it may go as high as 100 if they include other victims of the insurgency campaign," Villaverones said.

Datu Danny Udal, tribal chief in the village, said some members of his tribe were ordered by the NPA rebels to bury some of those who were killed.

"We feel that that it's about time that the relatives should know, and so the grants of the victims will be put to rest," Udal said.

Andoy Lasoot, 28, went to Barangay Sinonor in the hope that he would find the remains of his father, who was believed to be among those buried there.

"I am excited," he said, smiling, his breath during the digging. "Sana ay saw ko buto-buto ng tatay ko."

Villaverones said a combined forensic team from the police scene of crime operations and independent experts will arrive on Monday to examine the recovered remains.

He said they hoped to finish the digging 10 days.

It was in the mid-1980s that the communist movement implemented what they termed "kampanyang alsa," or the purging of suspected "deep penetration agents" of the government in the guerrilla organization.

'Kabayan' to bring rains

TROPICAL STORM "KABAYAN" (int. eight switched closer to northern Luzon and was expected to bring heavy rains and strong winds over the area, the weather bureau said.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said Kabayan, with maximum winds of 110 kph and gustiness of 135 kph, picked up speed Sunday morning and its least far night earlier Sunday expected.

Pagasa warned residents in northern Luzon provinces to be alert for flashfloods and landslides, and storm surges in the west throughout today until the storm exits the country on Wednesday morning.

Morning was southeast at 28 kph, the storm was forecast to hit the Ilocos Norte in Cagayan, Isabela, between 7 and 8 last night, it said.

Pagasa raised storm signal No. 1 over Isabela, Ifugao, Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya and northern Aurora. These provinces will experience heavy to intense and strong winds throughout the day.

"Those living in low-lying and near mountain areas should be prepared for floods and landslides," Pagasa deputy director Nathaniel Servando said in a briefing.

Storm signal No. 2 was raised over Cagayan, Kalinga, Mt. Province, Ilocos Sur, Benguet, Abra, Nueva Ecija, La Union, Pangasinan and the rest of Aurora.

Storm signal no. 1 was hoisted over the following areas of Isabela, Apayao, Ilocos Norte, Batanes, Zambales, Pampanga, Bulacan and northern Quezon, including the Polillo islands.

Pagasa forecast light to moderate rains over Metro Manila and the Ilocos region because of the latest weather disturbance.

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Boracay stakeholders want MMDA's Bayani as consultant

KALIBO CITY—AMID GROWING concerns over unregulated development and pollution threats to the world-renowned Boracay resort, officials and business owners on the island plan to tap Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando as development consultant for the island.

Malay (Aklan) Mayor Ciceron Cawaling and officials of the Boracay Foundation Inc. met with Fernando on Friday to discuss the possibility of his helping in the development of the island resort, according to BFI president Honorio Grel.

The BFI is a group of owners of resorts, restaurants and other businesses on the island.

Grel said the local government of Malay town, where Boracay is located, and the BFI had asked Fernando to be a consultant to the Malay Development Council.

He said Fernando was chosen because of his "credibility and track record" in enforcing regulations on development projects during his stint as Revenue master of Marikina City and as concerned MMDA chair.

"We need somebody with the credibility to ensure the sustainable development of the island," Grel said in a telephone interview yesterday.

Grel and Fernando was "very open" to helping the island.

Mel Jhoy would still seek the permission of President Macapagal-Arroyo to allow Fernando to be a consultant to the island concurrently with his being MMDA chair. Hanser P. Bergen Jr., Inquirer Visayas

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Negros prelate, others condemn Estrada pardon

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—BISHOP Vicente Navarra of the Diocese Diocese and a group of Negrenses condemned over the weekend what they called the "indecent manner" by which President Macapagal-Arroyo exercised her prerogative to grant a pardon to ousted President Joseph Estrada.

"We oppose in the strongest possible terms Estrada's being granted clemency; he should be made to suffer the consequences of his criminal and immoral acts," said a statement issued by the group on Saturday.

The statement, called "No to Indecent Pardon," was signed by Navarra, Fr. Aniceto Buenafe Jr., director of the Social Action Center of the diocese, and 20 other people from the Archdiocesan's Catholic Church, local government and civil society groups.

The group said Estrada's pardon on Oct. 25, shortly after he was convicted of plunder and sentenced to life imprisonment, was the "biggest travesty of justice" committed by President Arroyo.

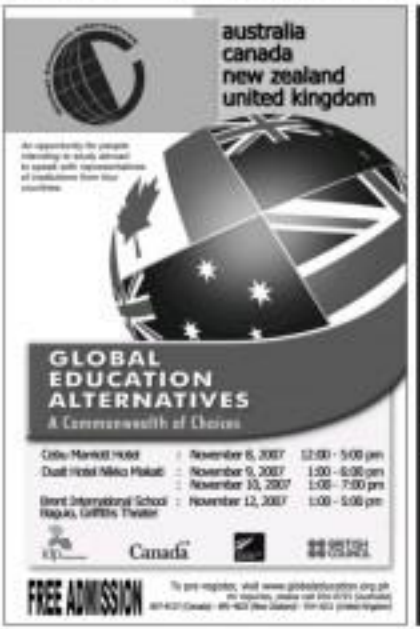
They said it was appalling the President hastily pardoned Estrada after six years of painstaking efforts at litigation by a team of state prosecutors, and the unanimous decision of three Sandiganbayan justices convicting him.

"The GMA pardon is not about giving justice to a former president of the country. It is about saving the neck of an incumbent president whose election is viewed as illegitimate by millions of Filipinos and whose administration is hounded by corruption scandals," the signatories said.

They said Estrada was clearly given special consideration by Ms Arroyo from the very start since he was detained at his own rest house in Tanay, Rizal, and did not experience being locked up in jail at all.

"As a former president occupying the highest office of the land, he was charged with the responsibility of upholding the law in spite of the public trust, he wielded the power and influence of his office to plunder the nation. For this treasonous crime, the burden of accountability is twice as heavy on him...he should have been detained in jail rather than pampered in his house arrest."

Many ordinary Filipinos were in jail for lesser offenses and suffered for a much longer time than Estrada without their cases being resolved, they said.



DOJ lawyers take crash course vs pyramid scams

By Leila B. Salaverria

TO GET COMPLAINTS ABOUT INVESTment scams in progress, the Department of Justice has held writing workshops for its prosecutors to train them to distinguish the victims of shoddy investment schemes from the ones they had investigated.

Another such "write shop" is scheduled later this month for prosecutors to decrease the number of pending complaints before the DOJ dealing with pyramid schemes and the like.

"Every time we are forced to settling the resolutions of all cases where the preliminary investigation proceedings have been terminated and are therefore submitted for resolution," Acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera said in a recent interview.

Devanadera said she was aiming to resolve all of the 300 complaints involving business scams that are still before the DOJ.

Once a resolution is issued, the DOJ would either dismiss the complaint or file the appropriate charges before the courts.

Of the 301 complaints, 145 have been resolved by the DOJ since 2002, according to Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Leah Armamento.

Armamento said the prosecutors under a task force on investment scams are now fast-tracking the resolution of the complaints because they had been given support in terms of a budget, office and the equipment to undertake the write shop. She said the sheer number of cases have gotten it difficult for the prosecutors to dispose of all of them at once.

"The cases have long been submitted for decision, it's just a matter of writing the decision. There are just too many. It's just a matter of getting priority now," she said.

She also said four of the 301 cases already resolved, only one person had been detained. The rest were filed or are set to be filed before the courts within the year. The charges include economic sabotage and violation of the Securities Check Law and Securities and Exchange Commission regulations.

Among those already resolved are the complaints against Multinational Telecom Investors Corp., owner Nate Padading as well as the officers and owners of Ultimate Group Investment Co. Inc. and Master Management Group Holdings, according to the prosecutor.

Pyramid schemes usually involve companies promising their clients high returns on their investments, the payment for which is sourced from new clients. Later, the companies fail to deliver payments due to the lack of new investors.

Armamento also said focus was being placed on investment scam complaints because of their numerous victims.

She also said the DOJ wanted the public to be better aware of such schemes to deprive them of their money. The same items can are still being used by the scammers, who promising returns for a minimal investment.

"It's same style up to today. It's just the medium that is different. Nowadays, they use the Internet. It's still the cliche that if it's too good to be true, the investor should beware," she said.

Network loses bid to stop cable merger

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS JUSTIFIED the bid of GMA Network Inc. to temporarily stop the merger of the Lopez-owned Bayan Cable and Philippine Cable Corp., saying such an act should be left to the discretion of the National Telecommunications Commission.

The appellate court refused to overturn the NTC's order denying GMA's motion for a cease and desist order against the merger of the cable companies while its complaint before the NTC was pending.

In ruling against GMA, the appellate court said the NTC had the power to decide whether a cease and desist order was necessary.

"Thus, the petitioner cannot compel the public respondent to issue a cease and desist order as it is a discretionary act on the part of the latter to issue the same," the CA said in an Oct. 10 decision.

In its complaint filed in 2003, GMA asked the NTC to compel the cable companies to restore its clear broadcast signal and to free it from dominance over cable systems.

The television network also asked that the NTC declare null and void the merger of Skycable and Home Cable under Beyond Cable, among other things. Skycable also owns majority of PCC, which operates Sun Cable.

Skycable is in turn controlled by the Lopez group which owns GMA's rival television network, ABS-CBN.

Later, GMA also sought a cease and desist order against the merger while the commission tackles its complaint.

In refusing to issue a cease and desist order, NTC had said such an act would be premature since it has not yet received evidence from the parties, and it would thus be tantamount to resolving GMA's complaint.

GMA then elevated the case to the Court of Appeals.

But the appellate court refused to rule on GMA's contention that the consolidation of the cable companies was unlawful and uncontested. Instead, it said the NTC's regulatory power over broadcasting and cable television operations also extended to ownership and regulation, among other things.

Hence, the NTC was the better judge to tackle GMA's allegations of unlawful business combination and unfair business practices, it added.

"It is [t]he best position to judge matters relating to the broadcasting industry as it is presumed to have an unparalleled understanding of its market and commercial conditions. Moreover, it is the NTC that has the information, statistics and data peculiar to the television broadcasting industry," it said.

The appellate court also agreed with the cable companies that the issuance of a cease and desist order would be too soon since it would be tantamount to resolving the case without the hearings being completed.

Leila B. Salaverria

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, November 5, 2007
31st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rom 11:29-36
Gospel: Luke 14:12-14

Jesus addressed the man who had invited him and said, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends, or your brothers and relatives and wealthy neighbors. For surely they will also invite you in return and you will be repaid. When you give a feast, invite instead the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Fortunate are you then, because they will repay you; you will be repaid at the Resurrection of the upright."

Commentary:

God's gifts and call are irrevocable, whether they are to Israel or to each of us called to baptism and conversion in Christ. He does because the mercy of God—how do we respond daily to God's goodness? For God is merciful, God is compassionate, and yet we know God in Jesus. And Jesus is a strange God. He refuses to care for the poor, the lame, the outsider. He said, the weary who cannot survive in the world, and he urges us to treat them with dignity and graciousness, as though we were loving God in our midst.... because we are. By this token, what we do to one another, our God who is close to himself, we are delighted to be able to do for others what we would want to do for our God? So we realize that this is the wisdom and knowledge, the mercy of God among us?

Little outrage over pardon can be trouble for GMA

From page A1

This was the message a segment of the urban poor was flagging, that they were cynical over whether Estrada was convicted or acquitted by a court of justice.

It did not seem to matter to the poor that the rule of law was observed in the trial of Estrada, and yet they were not unaware that under the self-proclaimed pro-poor presidency of Estrada, they were poorer than they were before.

Nor is there evidence that their poverty has been slightly alleviated by the loudly proclaimed antipoverty programs of the Arroyo administration, designed by almost an army of arrogant technocrats at the National Economic and Development Authority who are complete prototypes of the social incompetence of their role model.

No filter-down effect

The poor cannot transfer their loyalty to the poverty alleviation programs of President Arroyo because there have been very little to filt down from their ministry. They cannot identify with these programs and the claims of low economists that economic growth has been without precedent for the past years because the benefits of growth have not filtered down.

Working on official statistics, Dr. Mahar Mangahas, head of Social Weather Stations, has found that despite the steady rise of the gross national product, "family income have not been growing in step with the recent growth in GNP."

Indeed, "family incomes have recently been moving in the opposite direction," he points out. "Thus the recent GNP growth is not good news for people in general, no matter how loud are the voices to the government, to the business sector, or to the international development banks that proclaim that this is good news."

By series that the new Family Income and Expenditures Survey of 2006 found that the average annual income per family was P349,000 in 2006, compared to P340,000 in 2003.

"That's a real decrease of 2.7 percent," he writes, "which is definitely bad news for the people in general." The survey referred to the average annual income per family but for low-income families, it can only be suspected that the rate of decrease could have been bigger.

Political implications

This has implications for mass mobilization for political action. The consequence seems to be that Erap's fall not by the benefits cannot be used as mass weapons of people power movements led by the middle class in concert with the military.

The last time the urban poor stormed Malacañang was on May 1, 2001, in a violent protest against the arrest of the lavishly deposed Estrada by the middle class-driven Edsa II. They were not involved in Edsa II. They did not respond to several Edsa calls in 2005 over the Garci tapes, coup conspiracies and the Ople impeachment complaints against Mr. Arroyo.

The urban poor are no longer Estrada's legion to mobilize since he was ex-ousted by the pardon, but they have not been won over by the pardon. They do not share the intensity of the outrage of the middle class over the pardon. They are apathetic to the decency to the rule of law and the unequal administration of justice, because they have been the victims of injustice all their lives.

Changes in the president since the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos mean little to them and have not changed their lives for the better.

Crooks have come and gone, and the urban poor are cynical about any movement that calls for another Edsa over the Estrada pardon and the seemingly endless corruption scandals of the Arroyo administration.

Disenchanted with protests

Disenchanted with the outcomes of prior upheavals, the poor have learned from their frustrations and, therefore, have clung to the "magic" of a false charismatic call of an imagined emancipator.

For all Estrada's posturing as the master of the masses, the poor have not been close to see through the ungodliness over the pardon as no less than another farce perpetrated by the elite facing things among themselves, between the ruling class and the excluder elite, unintelligible by the fraudulent label "national reconciliation."

Recent newspaper reports have noted that the outrage over the pardon is "increasingly growing in the cyberspace" but the reports also point out the indignation is spreading in e-mail exchanges, letters to editor, papers, blogs and chat rooms—in short, in both media of mass communications mainly among the churning middle class whose voice is disappearing in bits.

They cannot fill the streets to compose a critical mass. The urban poor have never been the main component of people power since 1986.

Impeachment, coup plots

This is not good news for Mr Arroyo. The middle class without mass following are now translating their outrage in other non-electoral means, including impeachment and coup plots by disgruntled military officers.

In the realignment of constituencies shaken by the pardon outrage and the recent corruption scandals, the President has been narrowing her base and losing allies in the business sector and in Congress.

The business sector is divided and is concerned over the President's capacity to consolidate the final reforms that helped spur economic growth being set back by ramshackle governance issues. It is the dislocation of constituencies that can crash her regime.

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Bangkok calling world media

HONOLULU—The East-West Center (EWC) is gathering journalists from around the world for a three-day conference on current headlines and common concerns of media professionals.

EWC, a US government-funded education and research organization, has issued an open invitation to media professionals from around the world to attend the conference in Bangkok, Thailand, from Jan. 20 to 23, 2008.

"It will be a chance for journalists to network with hundreds of [fellow] journalists from around the world," said EWC media program coordinator Lionel Knobloch in a recent briefing here.

Current issues

"We will get to discuss common problems ... I think we will have a lot from each other," said Jeyaratnam, EWC writer, editor and external affairs officer.

With the theme, "Changing Dynamics in the Asia Pacific: Power Politics, Economic Might and Media Challenges," the conference will host some top newsmakers from Asia and the United States who will speak on current news events such as the Burma (Myanmar) military regime's crackdown on prodemocracy protesters, the campaign to denuclearize North Korea and the 2008 Beijing Olympics coverage.

RP journalist

Filipino journalist Sheila Coronel, a founder of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and now professor at Columbia University Journalism School, will deliver the keynote address for the sessions on Asian media issues and media ownership or investigative journalism.

A day will be devoted to China, with speakers tackling the country's regional and global impact in terms of economy and politics and what to expect during the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Interested parties may check registration details on EWC's website, www.east-westcenter.org.

Inva Valenzuela

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Miriam opens bid for seat on int'l court

By Dona Pazulingan

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO has opened her campaign for a seat in the International Court of Justice.

She addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Nov. 2, giving a speech on "Shared Natural Resources and Reservation to Treaties."

A statement issued by her Senate office yesterday said Santiago her address was also part of the celebration of International Law Commission (ILC) Week and served as her introduction to the international law community.

While in New York, Santiago is expected to meet the various UN ambassadors through receptions hosted by the Philippine Mission.

Panel's choice

Santiago was nominated for a seat in the ICJ on July 26. She was chosen by a panel composed of Supreme Court Associate Justice Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Florentino Feliciano, Antonio Javier Integrated Bar of the Philippines national president Jose Victor Salazar and University of Santo Tomas faculty of civil law Dean Alfredo Benipayo.

President Macapagal-Arroyo nominated Santiago's nomination during the Asean Ministers meetings on July 31.

Last month, Santiago asked us to unraised from her Senate duties for a year to campaign...from October 2007 to November 2008.

She requested to be marked on "official mission" during the time she will be away from the Senate.

If elected, Santiago will serve in the ICJ beginning 2009. Her Senate term ends in 2010.

She will also be the first Asian woman judge to serve in the ICJ and the second woman overall...after Rosalyn Higgins from the United Kingdom who is the current ICJ president.

Majority vote

Five seats in the ICJ will be vacant by Feb. 5, 2009. The elections will be held at UN headquarters in New York in late 2008. A candidate will need to get a majority vote in both the General Assembly and the Security Council which will vote simultaneously but apart.

The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It decides legal disputes between states and issues "advisory opinions" on legal questions referred to it by UN agencies.

Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Cesar Bengzon served as an ICJ judge from 1967 to 1976.

Korean national hit by bus, dies

CALABAR CITY—A KOREAN BUSINESSMAN died shortly after being hit by a speeding bus while crossing the Antipolo highway in Barangay Sapang Kabuaya here on Friday night, police said Sunday.

Supt. Roland Timtim, city police chief, identified the fatality as Hwang Yoon Ho, 42, caught in a mishap at Sitio Bukal in the barangay.

Timtim said police had launched a hunt for the bus driver identified as Felcher Montenegrin, 30, a resident of Sapang Lagoon.

He said the Korean was crossing the highway on a curve at around 8 p.m. when he was hit by the bus. Ono-board bus driven by Montenegrin.

Instead of stopping to help the victim, Timtim said the driver sped away and later abandoned the bus, owned by HM Bus Transit, on a road in Barangay Kabila, Victoria town, some 39 kilometers from where the accident happened.

Timtim said bus company officials had promised to help bring the driver to police. Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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He once vowed true democracy

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in a coup eight years ago and has been the repeated target of assassination attempts for allying his Islamic nation with the United States in its war overseas, promised to bring true democracy to Pakistan.

But on Saturday, days before the Supreme Court was to rule on his future as the country's top-ranking leader, he declared a state of emergency.

Musharraf's decision to end Pakistan's support for the hard-line Taliban regime in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States won him new friends in the West—and enemies at home.

He efforts toward peace with the country's historic rival, India, welcomed by citizens on both sides of the subcontinent, also angered hard-liners.

Musharraf, 64, has survived several attempts on his life, including two huge bombings in December 2003.

Musharraf was born on Aug. 11, 1943, in New Delhi, India, the middle son of a diplomat. His family migrated by train during independence from Britain in 1947, when predominantly Hindu India and Islamic Pakistan brutally divided.

Joining the army in 1964, he quickly rose through the ranks and was promoted to army chief under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 1998.

Their relationship soured in the following year after Musharraf organized a Pakistani push into the Indian-held part of Kashmir, bringing the two nuclear-armed countries to the brink of war.

When Sharif tried to oust him, effectively obstructing Musharraf's plane from landing in Pakistan after a trip abroad, the army chief seized power in a bloodless coup. He promised the nation he would bring true democracy to Pakistan....a move welcomed by many Pakistanis, who were increasingly frustrated by the corrupt civilian government.

His takeover angered the international community, but his response to the Sept. 11 attacks won back friends.

He agreed to support the US war on terror, a decision that enraged Islamic fundamentalists, but brought billions of aid dollars to his near-bankrupt country.

In December 2001, Musharraf faced a new crisis when Islamic militants launched a deadly attack on the Indian Parliament. International diplomacy helped ease tensions.

Musharraf held elections in 2002, but only after amending the constitution to give himself sweeping powers to sack the prime minister and Parliament.

He reneged on a promise to quit his army post by the end of 2004 and take on a civilian presidency. He claimed the country needed stability as it confronted al-Qaeda terrorists on home soil. AP

State restrictions

SOME OF THE RESTRICTIONS AND fundamental rights that have been suspended in Pakistan by the state of emergency declared by President Gen. Pervez Musharraf:

- Article 8 of Pakistan's constitution safeguarding life and liberty has been suspended. Several opposition lawmakers and activists have been detained.
- People can be arrested without being informed of their offense and denied access to lawyers under emergency powers.
- The right to free movement has been suspended.
- Constitutional protection of property rights are also suspended.
- Citizens have been banned from assembling in public. Political parties will therefore be unable to address rallies ahead of planned new year parliamentary elections.
- A suspension of the right to free speech will likely extend the country's muzzle on opposition groups.
- Provisions giving equal rights to all citizens before the law and equal protection have been suspended. AP

A setback to

WORLD LEADERS YESTERDAY CALLED for a swift return to a constitutional government in Pakistan and said military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf's declaration of a state of emergency was a setback for democracy.

The United States, which has cast Musharraf as a key ally in its global fight against terrorism, said it was deeply disturbed by the moves.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, speaking in Jerusalem at the start of two days of meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, said she has once again, to Musharraf, urged he impound the state of emergency.

"I just want to repeat that the United States does not support...and indeed, called to the Pakistani leadership prior to this action that we would look very poor, extraordinary means," she said.

"The issue now is it's in the best inter-

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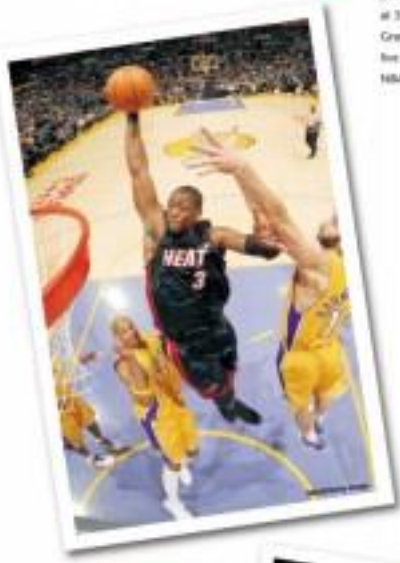

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What Drives You CALTEX

Pakistan opposi

From page A1

to the media and from another key opposition party leader, Benazir Bhutto, that Musharraf had in fact imposed martial law—direct rule by the army—without announcing it. He said there was not the case as the prime minister and parliament were still in place.

"There is no martial law in the country. Only a state of emergency has been declared," he said. "The civilian government will continue to function."

In Islamabad, phone service (and Internet service) when the state of emergency was declared on Saturday evening appeared to have been restored by Sunday morning. But transmissions by TV news networks remained off the air in major cities other than state-controlled Pakistan TV.

Troops ring Supreme Court

Scores of paramilitary troops at barbed wire barricades blocked access to the Supreme Court and parliament. Otherwise the streets of the capital appeared calm.

The US-allied leader declared the emergency despite calls from Washington and other Western allies not to take another step that would further engineered deep concern and called for him to restore democracy, but said it would not affect US military support of Pakistan.

Sharra, a former prime minister who had travelled abroad in the wake of an Oct. 18 suicide attack that narrowly missed her but killed 140 others, immediately flew back to the southern city of Karachi, and declared the emergency was the "blackest day" in Pakistan's history.

Her view that martial law was now in place was shared by many media commentators, particularly as Musharraf declared the emergency in his capacity as chief of army staff. The constitution gives the president, not the army chief—should make such a declaration, and only if the country's security is threatened by war, external aggression or internal disturbance.

In a televised address, Musharraf, looking

2 more impeachi

FORMER HOUSE TO UNSEAT PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo have lined up two more impeachment complaints against her.

The twin cases being readied by about 10 nascent-oriented and civil society groups will combine the question of whether Mr. Arroyo, by virtue of the "bond" complaint filed by lawyer Atal Pelaez—a really immune from new impeachment cases because of a rule barring the filing of more than one case against an official within one year.

Neri Colmenares, a member of the legal team preparing the new cases, said the groups' intent

GMA, De Venecia a

From page A1

fireworks, there will be none—not even wetted."

To further prove that the ruffled ties within Lakas had been mended, the Nikon released a photo of the group after their Saturday night meeting at Malacañang—with Mr. Arroyo, Atienza, Ms. Nograles and the other officials beaming and flashing Mabuhay signature thumbs-up sign.

"Let this day douse all rumors and speculation that this government is divided," Mr. Arroyo said. "It is strong and focused on the business of the people."

The Lakas leaders also apparently consolidated their ranks to thwart the defeat of any move to compel to impeach Mr. Arroyo.

The Lakas caucus was attended by about a dozen key members, including Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunyi, Sen. Jose Miguel Zubiri, Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar, Defensor, Nograles, Senator Deputy Majority Leader Nepthali Gonzales II, Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines head Ramon Guico, League of Cities president Jerry Treñas and League of Provinces president Lorna Gonzales.

Ermita acknowledged that the Arroyo and the Veterans had clashed in their differences.

Atienza's invasion the two passed after the Speaker's ear, Mandaluyong Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, claimed that his lawyer and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, were involved in the allegedly anomalous awarding of the now-scrapped $329 million National Broadband Network project with China's ZTE Corp.

"Well, something like that," Ermita said in a phone interview when asked whether the two leaders had kissed and made up.

And that was done "for the sake of the country."

democracy, say world leaders

Pakistan and the best interests of ...ntrated people for them to be a ... return to the constitutional ... for there to be affirmation that ... will be held for a new Parlia... the said.

...uttle

...aval's move was seen as a battle ... the Bush administration, which ...d us both any move around au... tions in Pakistan.

...th officials raided the state of ...ency a major setback for Pakistani ...PO.

...recognize the drive to peace and ... faced by the country late in fo... ers on harnessing the power of ...ety and take the side of law to ... the people of stability, develop... and cultivating ourselves," British ...ecretary David Miliband said in ...ent.

Asia's two largest countries, however, enjoyed rich tensions. Chiba said it was confident Pakistan could solve its own problems, while longtime rivals India ...ompared his response to Iraqi telephone ...ening it registered Pakistan's "diffi... (All Rights) ...

...ington, which recently halted a ... year anti-terrorism mission in the Indian Ocean, said Musharraf's actions hindered the establishment of democ... racy.

"Quotes has consistently supported this ...tyson's war on terror and its efforts to es... stablish democracy. Japan strongly hopes that Pakistan will soon overcome necessary and return to the process of democratization," the Foreign Ministry said.

India conciliatory

India issued a conciliatory response, although it has perhaps the most at stake if Pakistan descends into chaos. Pakistan and India have fought three wars against one another and still have a tense relationship, though relations have improved in recent years.

"We regret the difficult times that Pakistan is passing through," Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee told a briefing in New Delhi. "We voice that conditions of normalcy will soon return, permitting Pakistan's ...ssentials to stability and democracy to continue."

China, one of Pakistan's closest allies and a major source of investment, trade and armaments, signaled its preference for behind-the-scenes diplomacy.

"We believe the Pakistani government and people have the ability to solve its own problem," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Liu Jianchao said in a statement.

But he added, "We hope Pakistan maintains stability and development." AP

tion leaders ...

...nomy and compared, said Pakistan was at a "dangerous" juncture, its government threatened by Islamic extremists.

"The extremists have more sponsors interested, and the extremists are taking the writ of the government in their own hands, and even more, they are imposing their obnoxious ideas on unobservant," Musharraf said, wearing a black Armani dress suit rather than his military fatigues.

He also blasted the Supreme Court's for promoting many officials and postponing the November ...ssure of his recent election win, saying it had "an ...ti-parliament" government. The court was to rule ...soon on whether to validate the result of the vote ...that opponents say was unconstitutional because he continued the state of emergency.

Musharraf on Saturday replaced the chief justice, Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, who had ...emerged as the main check on the president.

Stop downslide

"Now the time for the action has come. I have carefully examined the situation to see how to stop this downslide. We have to create harmony among judiciary, legislature and executive. This is how we would tackle the issue of terrorism in a better way," Musharraf said.

He said there would be no change in the government and its top officials, and parliament—set to dissolve by Nov. 15—would complete its term. He did not say when parliamentary elections—due by January—would be held.

Only four of the Supreme Court's 17 judges agreed to take the oath of office under the provisional constitutional order imposed by Musharraf in the ensuing ...commission, passed in 1973, were non-observant, ...newspapers reported. In all, only 33 of 97 senior judges across Pakistan did so, the reports said.

Private Geo TV reported the arrest of the president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, Aitzaz Ahsan. ...a lawyer for Chaudhry in the case that led to his reinstatement in July after Musharraf tried to sack him. Another opposition party leader, Imtiaz Shah, was put under house arrest Saturday. AP, Reuters

ment complaints

...ge involved area approaches...file a case supplementing Pedido's complaint and file an encode ...ere complaint.

The supplemental complaints, expected to be filed today, will be based on the $329-million National Broadband Network scandal and the alleged distribution of money to congressmen in Makati ...ng on Oct. 23.

Commissioners said the second complaints would deal with human rights violations and alleged ...electoral fraud during the 2004 presidential elections. Christine F. Espinosa

ffirm Lakas unity

...Fresnia said.

Fresnia said Arroyo that De Venecia would be ...ensured as Speaker were "just speculations" and that De Venecia would switch sides were just newspaper accounts.

Asked whether the meeting discussed the impeachment case against Mr. Arroyo, Fresnia said the subject was talked up.

But he said Mr. Arroyo merely listened as House leaders explained why opposition Chiefs to file an amended or a second impeachment case against her would not prosper.

Fresnia said the Commission was very clear that the new impeachment case could be filed against the President while another impeachment was still pending against her.

He said House leaders explained that the impeachment case that lawyer Rod Pulido filed last month ...which was endorsed by Rep. Edgar San Luis ...was already dismissed or is now moot for really ...ensured, barring the filing of another complaint.

"Now they will handle it. It's up to them," Fresnia said when asked how Mr. Arroyo's allies in the House would handle the matter.

Aztec Rep. Teresa Laguesma, chair of the committee on appropriations, said party leaders agreed to defuse "all this wild talk about Makabulong moving to oust the Speaker."

"The Speaker is safe," Gonzales said.

Defensor said party leaders didn't tackle the Senate testimony of De Venecia's son against the First Couple in connection with the $329 project.

"I think there was a clear understanding that those things belonged to the past," he said. "Let bygones be bygones." With a report from Ed Tower Pinpoint, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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INQUIRER

OPINION

Scandalous art

JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT THE REPUTATION OF the once proud National Press Club could not go any lower, here comes news—and vivid visual evidence—of more unethical conduct. After commissioning a new mural on "press freedom" from the San Augusto Artists Collective, the NPC censored the finished work by replacing or fudging what one of its directors called "leftist marks."

EDITORIAL Should the rest of the country care? A discredited organization which has long ceased to represent the country's cause of working journalists; a new painting on an old theme, worth less than a million pesos; a debate on an almost philosophical level: preserving the integrity of art versus meeting a certain standard of neutrality. This is, at first glance, far from a gut issue.

But like any work of art worth its name, this "bastardization" of the mural (as the artists themselves put it) requires a second look, repays a closer study. The subject is press freedom, but the issue is journalistic responsibility.

In the first place, the changes to the mural effectively undermine the work itself. The original painting was a meditation on press freedom today—that is to say, the present time of unexplained disappearances and international condemnation. It is precisely this context that was taken out from the mural, like inconvenient details airbrushed out of old communist portraits.

Thus: The newspaper with the headline "Press Freedom Fighter's Son Abducted," with pictures of the abductee, Jonas Burgos, and his mother, was changed to a more generic version. The headline now reads: "Press Freedom Fight in Go," and the pictures were distorted to remove any likeness to the victim or his mother.

But in the exercise of press freedom today, under the Arroyo administration, the Burgos abduction and its coverage are in fact a defining moment. Similarly, the statement of the International Federation of Journalists heralding the effect of the Human Security Act on press freedom was painted over, and replaced by what the artists called a "hideous local minister in a cage." The very topicality of the work is denied. We can guess why: to make the mural less inconvenient to the guest of honor who unveiled it on Oct. 26.

Secondly, the changes to the mural gloss over the largely political provenance of press freedom in the Philippines. NPC president Roy Mabasa told the Inquirer: "We don't want to be politicized; they [the artists] went overboard. We don't want to be associated with the Left or Right. The club is apolitical; it can stand on its own." This is insipid thinking, at best; insidious rhetoric, at worst.

Set aside the damning detail that the NPC leadership had three weeks to review the mural but ordered the changes made overnight, only on the eve of the unveiling; or that one director said he followed the progress of the painting "since Day 1." Only consider the history of the free press in the Philippines. Can any journalist honestly say that press freedom in the country is "apolitical"? Important, yes, often enough, but never apolitical, precisely because the freedom to write the truth was won and lost and won again in political struggle. That is why Andrew Bonifacio is there; he wrote for Kalayaan. That is why Inquirer columnist Juan Mercado is there; he went to jail when martial law was declared. To deny those and similar "details" is to render press freedom vulnerable to another assault.

The Augusto artists could only be said to have gone "overboard" if the sensibilities of non-journalists—today's ruling politicians, led by the NPC's guest of honor—were taken into account.

This is where the responsibility of journalists becomes relevant. The journalist has the duty to "tell it as it is"—a duty recognized by the Constitution in granting the press certain rights and privileges, a duty that cannot be fulfilled if the press is not independent of the powers-that-be, including Presidents who come as guests of honor.

We recognize that the integrity of a work of art must be respected, we believe that the press cannot be neutral in the face of politically motivated threats to its very existence. But above all, we affirm that the members of the press have a responsibility to act independently—not those in the mural's crowd when the guest of honor comes a-calling.

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Old NPC mural 'stolen'; new one censored

HOT IT IRONIC THAT A MURAL ON PRESS freedom commissioned by the officers of the National Press Club has itself been censored by an official of the NPC itself, at the instigation of the government? The mural by supposedly leftist artists given freedom, instead is illustrated very clearly how the press (or the National Press Club which is supposed to be an association of journalists) is under the thumb of the government and how it is not difficult of the NPC top officials to use media as are willing accomplices to censorship.

How did this come about? Let us start from the beginning. It started when some bums in the Bureau of Customs succeeded in becoming regular members of the NPC without the then regular attendance of the press members said "bacdamo" (pronounced "bow wow")—pseudo journalists or pressmen. But as members they are technically qualified to run for positions in the club, which they did. They have since managed to assume control of the NPC through the ballot.

During the regular NPC elections, while the legitimate members tore their pulls on the fourth floor of the club, the "bow wowed" held theirs in the basement. They have since been seen at least and added for new elections, which is the cause granted.

Those who were elected in the regular polls bypassed the new election, claiming that it was irregular, and that the "bow wowed" members had by default via court order. The "bac-damos" took over.

The opposing party questioned the "irregular" proclamation in the court, but the court is acting on the case even though the two-year term of the elections officials has already expired.

As one of its very first acts, the new officers with the valuable mural in the NPC dining hall by National Artist Vicente Manansala to all semblance buried the P10 million witness monument to the greatest Filipino journalist Ramon Magsaysay. Another of its first acts was to remove the mural by Malaya's favorite cartoonist Nonoy Marcelo, and have the call to resign a pressman ... it seems that ordinary people are more concerned about social life than the bishops are. I wouldn't wonder who enough. Bishops live in comfortable (if not air-conditioned) houses and have food on the table. Journalists—Manila journalists, least anyway—live in constant destitution. Some government patronage.

"Communists looking up to bishops and priests as representatives of God. I think many of the faithful believe distinctly. That when bishops fall in love with power, get involved and disagree and sometimes see even questions our faith."

At the same time this issue appeared, one front page carried the last installment of one three part series on the reforms the Supreme Court has been waging since Associate Justice Reynato Puno took over. That installment was the Lucio Tan tax evasion case. Testimony flown remains on extrajudicial killings," and Fernando del Mundo's inducing "Chief Justice Puno, the unlikely revolutionary."

Unlike the Mindanao bishops, headed by ex-CBCP head Archbishop Fernando Capalla, Puno is a self-confessed "lawyer." He readily admits to once being a lawyer whose job is the solicitor general's office was to defend martial law. The experience, however, rather than numbing his brain and turning his heart to stone, opened his eyes and he rose to his feet. He resolved to almost live it by making sure the injustices he saw during that time were never repeated again. He vowed to make sure the dismantling would never again be in the country again.

Some people make many and brave claim about as much as they've made them, while some seem and dedicate their lives to them.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

a stain, sometimes as there was no question, which was probably the general reason because no writers were sent to the members who would have disapproved of the sale of its most prized possession.

Meanwhile, the Government Service Insurance System, which had financed the mural, stepped and now seeks and has title to the NPC property, and the SPC board, the upper floor, huge level and the entrance hopes claiming that it owns the Manansala mural. It said the mural was not part of the purchase of the old dining hall, is part of the building it owns but was sold by the NPC—which was occupying and using the building for free—without permission of the owners. GSIS, it said the NPC board for qualified itself. Again, somebody should tell them how to read the law.

Trying to evade the issues and the growing uproar against the controversial sale, the NPC board decided to commission the two Augusto Artists Collective to paint a new mural, yet huge enough to cover the old one. But when the members saw the new mural with the NPC building as the center and various people reading newspapers.

The NPC officers turned President Macapagal-Arroyo into the center of the mural. Do we have evidence of officials [Clark and the NPC board], whose legitimacy is in question, playing favorites. The new mural was placed not in the dining hall where the original was, but in the lobby.

Insert: Rose where increasingly men are held for dead NPC members, before the unveiling, the Presidential Security Group improved the mural and moved certain "leftist marks."

The organizers the NPC presidents, Roy Mabasa, on his own, had an artist—whom he refused to name—overseas the mural's without consulting the original artists. These artists protested the censorship.

The objections, according to the Inquirer report, I have not seen the original and controversial version there.

"The headline of the newspaper that Jose Ideal is holding, 'Press Freedom Fighter's Son Abducted,' was replaced with 'Press Freedom Fight in Go,' and the pictures of Jonas Burgos and his standing activist was not detected.

"The Atlanta Cuenco on Andrew Bonifacio's left arm was replaced with a red heart pierced by an arrow.

"The bale of [illegible] columnist Randy David was lengthened.

"The name of the International Court of Justice of the Philippines was erased from the banner of demonstrators.

"A beautiful a tragedy he were protractor the face of the woman carried over pervious door for the change of the hair from white to black."

The artists and they were shocked by the alterations when they went to the NPC to look at their mural. They sent file a case against the NPC with the Intellectual Property Office.

"Won't these alterations a clear violation of the rights of artists/artists protected by the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines?" they asked.

The NPC, like the GMA administration, is getting deeper into controversies as it wriggles to get out of original mistakes. Why not just request for its original on and return the original Manansala mural to its rightful place? The controlling did not ask for a new mural.

And the controversial mural on the pending cases against the NPC board. Shouldn't the Supreme Court order the latter sessions to make the artworks of justice more basic?

Thank God

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

SIMA belongs to the first. Puno is the second. Since he became Chief Justice, Puno has moved to head off decisively, which he fears the regime is dangerously heading toward. He has specifically moved to put a stop to the "culture of impunity" which has spawned a daughter of all impunities: the unabashed attempt to install Jun Ven Ivan by meddling the writ of amparo, a power implicitly vested in the Supreme Court by the Constitution, which orders the military and police to open their premises to inspection and prove that they have no hand in an abduction, torture, or killing. Sweet disappearance when they are accused of it instead of merely denying it.

I did say in the column I wrote on the Ishmael Bunye hearings that it was indicative of the deep confidence that which said Sudan the faithful faithless, that would make the Bush dwellers leave the shepherd and lead after themselves. Thankfully not all the clergy today belongs to that fold. Thankfully, Angel Lagdameo, the current CBCP head, like Oscar Cruz, has refused to make denials, if he sits by himself did not consent, and goes even down the dominoes and agrees the rightists. But it still be a long time before the Church can regain the standing it had not too long ago when it was looked upon as the voice of heaven and earth, the source of Duterte and Ejercitado' life.

Thank God there's the Supreme Court. And I for one want to use this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation for what it has done during the reign of terror of the current Arroyo regime. I mention I merely thought the judiciary long exposed to be the bastion of everything other than justice—it was known

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Debate over Jpepa

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

FOR SOME TIME NOW THE DRAFT OF THE Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement has been hanging fire in the Senate where it has been submitted by the President for concurrence. There seems to be a sharp division between the government sponsoring the treaty and the opposition against its ratification.

The debate is along both economic and constitutional lines and its resolution can have a very significant impact on the life of the nation. I shall limit myself to the constitutional issues which have been drawn along nationalistic lines.

It is well-known that our Constitution is heavily loaded with nationalistic provisions which reserve certain areas of the economy for Filipino citizens and Filipino corporations. Certain, however, are not these provisions as characterized by the "national treatment" provisions in the treaty which are now also sibling the Philippines and the Japanese nationals as if they were Philippine nationals. For these part, supporters of the treaty point to "reservations" which exclude from "national treatment" areas protected by the Constitution against foreign participation.

I have gone over some of the exchanges from both sides of the debate and what I see is that decidedly both sides want to protect the Constitution. But the two sides seem to differ in their understanding of what is protected and what is not. The critics tend to have looked for the "reservations" in Section 7 of the treaty and found them missing, whereas the supporters of the treaty say that the reservations are found in Annex D.

The treaty, together with annexes and questions, fills 393 single-spaced pages. I myself have attempted to wade through them, with the aid of "all fours" and "all fourers" I did find some of the claimed reservations in Annex D, but, since I did not go through it thoroughly, I did not run out the dividend and unveiled reservations. (I shall take time up to those detail in my next column.)

I guess what I am saying is that there is need for the Senate and its staff to comb through the entire documents to see whether indeed the needed reservations are there, whether in Annex D or elsewhere. It may also be necessary for the sponsoring panel to draft clearer statements than what it has in the official documents, showing how each provision complies with the constitutional provision it is safeguarding by a corresponding provision in the treaty (with clarification, or even simplification, if you wish, may be needed in order to help the senators analyze the documents while busy with proliferating legislative investigations).

Setting the Constitution aside for the moment, it is not just a matter of factual justification of a treaty. This is because the nationalistic provisions of the Constitution are not all of the same kind. Some of them are obvious manifestations of their protectionist, e.g., the provisions requiring 60 per cent or 40 percent or 100 percent capitalization. But even these can present some problems of interpretation.

The more difficult provisions, however, are the non-economic ones. These may be found in policy guidelines in Article II of the Constitution (Declaration of Principles and in Article XII (National Economy). These provisions deal with policy issues and can give rise to many debates like: Court, in the language of Justice Florentino P. Feliciano, has aptly stated to wade "into the intellectual morass of social and economic policy making." What is correct or error of discussion the Court is forced to limit itself to determining "whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction," an admittedly uncertain area of review.

Under the terms of the 1987 Constitution, the Court has had to deal with problems of this nature. Some of the more notable ones are Oposa v. Factoran Jr. (about logging), Tañada v. Angara (on the WTO Treaty) and La Bugal v. Ramos (about mining).

I find Tañada's degree nearly discussing because it dealt with an economic treaty. Tañada, of course, is one of the main scapegoats when it involves Ajepa. But what I find useful about it is the constitutional methodology it used in dealing with the treaty-as treaty raised about the obligations to "provide national treatment" to all WTO members.

Essentially what Tañada did was to exercise in balancing different legislature but potentially opposing demands of the Constitution. Or, more precisely the Court did not do the balancing but rather it chose to the Executive and Legislature departments.

The Constitution demands that the state seek a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income and wealth and a sustained increase in the amount of goods and services provided by the nation for the benefit of the people and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged. These are not self-executing provisions.

They are not self-executing terms, however, the Constitution activates the ideals of economic nationalism through provisions scattered in Articles C and Article XII. Here balance this with the previous set of provisions?

It is in case that the Court in Tañada case of Manila Prince stated had a restrictive conclusions. But the Court in Tañada dealt with is saying that even Manila Prince did not prescribe a balancing approach. "Rather, the issue is whether, as a rule, the provisions of the WTO Agreement are in the Constitution to allow the Senate to ratify the Philippine membership in the WTO Agreement." The Court found enough balancing provisions in the treaty to engage being prima facie to an "abuse of discretion." It implies that in that Tañada was a polite way of overruling Bute Manila Prince.)

But back to Jpepa. Indeed, one-sid justification of the treaty might be needed. It shall deal with this next time. I don't think there are slam-serious points issues as to which are best left to the department mandated to decide policy decisions.

To the streets of cyberspace

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

IT WOULD SEEM LIKE THE STREETS WILL BE empty of protests today from the Davao police that will overwhelm across the nation. I mean across the nation — not just in Manila which is not necessarily the pulse of the nation's body politic. I mean that the protests may be more evident, but cannot interfere and forestall, not in Manila but in underground Mindanao. And there seems to be some of this against the tactical parties by President Macapagal-Arroyo. But cyberspace is different. Cyberspace is where the Philippines' most dynamic political phenomenon the previous week.

Because you have the anger against the forces in position is swelling across Mega and elsewhere, among e-mail exchanges and online letters. Because the people's power revolution, Philippine economics abroad where the protest calls are being sounded out in study meeting rooms somewhere in Manila but by online expatriates across a borderless world.

Because this is the people's cyberspace was not a factor in 1986 and certainly not as high-tech as it is today during the Estrada regime in 2000, today unrest in writing has evolved into a social phenomenon. Whether that will be expressed into action remains to be seen. But for sources, as some hope it would, remains to be seen.

Some now cyberspace was a convenient resource in politically stifled Indian-hop Bantay Tabuanan, despite the very intense opposition it faced from the Philippine military. In the

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Bribes: impunity in action

GEN TO IMALGO HAS PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL Arroyo by her throat. He holds solid proof of the act of bribery—P500,000 in solid cash. It affirms the stinking bribery in the ZTE deal, the Salvan bribery and the bribery of the members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. It individually establishes that her administration is surviving through bribery. In fact, the men of both have been excluded from such deplorable scandals.

Unemployment Juan de la Cruz is asking: When will the President be held before the bar of justice? Impunity is the word that best describes the President's reign.

The killings are continued. Corruption is so gross that the Philippines now occupies the topmost step in the ladder of corruption. Guerrero officials have no compunction in openly lying before television. What a shameful administration.

The joke during Marcos' time was: A janitor was asked what the problem of the Philippines was. The lowly janitor, in his blessed innocence, said: "Kung sinino, sir."

How about this time?

—G. EMMANUEL C. FONTANILLA,
5-9 Gonzales Bldg.,
Pioneer Avenue, General Santos City

UP profs deny disputing methane gas angle

REGARDING THE NEWS ITEM "UP PROFS dispute methane gas angle" by TJ Burgonio (Nov. 1, 10:29/07), we want to comment that the headline does not reflect the contents of the article. Rather, it is another matter. To make the news more interesting.

We are not disputing the methane gas angle of the diesel fuel angle. The two substances are explosive substances under respective appropriate conditions, as reported in many parts of the world.

Given the nature of the damage in the Ubay area blasts, we can list the conditions necessary for methane gas or diesel fuel explosions. However, to avoid any controversy, we will not state and accept the result of the investigations by the authorities.

—WILFREDO G. MOO, Ph.D.,
ERNESTO DELA CRUZ, Ph.D.,
professors,
Department of Chemical Engineering,
University of the Philippines

'Twas the work of Santiago City, not Isabela

THE REFERS TO THE NEWS STORY "The Pinoy need up, speak out in general" (Oct. 31, 12:10/07) by Cynthia D. Balana. The report stated that the Province of Isabela gathered 94,807 people to speak out against poverty.

We could not believe what we read because it was the local government of Santiago City, under the leadership of Mayor Amelita S. Sanvers, that gathered those people for the event. The city's information office reported the number to the United Nations Information Center in the Philippines.

A correction of the error account will be deeply appreciated. More than recognition, we want the truth.

—CLARITA R. JAVIER,
city cooperative development officer,
Santiago City

The story was based on a statement from the United Nations' Manila office.

—CYNTHIA D. BALANA,
reporter, Inquirer

Capalla, Mindanao bishops acting in prudence

I JUST WENT TO COMMENT ON THE COLumn of Gerardo de Quiroz titled "Sheep and lion, shepherd inc." (Oct. 25, 9:57/07). I found the article interesting and enlightened.

De Quiroz accused shepherdings Fernando Capalla as "acting like a snarly of the flock rather than a prince of the Church." I find the remark very offensive and unfair to the good bishop. I don't know how De Quiroz came up with the conclusion that Capalla's deliberation of cleverness and impartial investigation is the same as Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's deliberation.

I see nothing wrong when Capalla and 34 other bishops from Mindanao said that the whole truth about the mess must be ascertained first before subjecting it to moral severity and judgment. I believe that the bishops were just exercising enough prudence in order to be fair to the President.

The way I see it, De Quiroz just made hasty misread the prudence of Bishop Capalla and the 34 bishops.

—JOHN MARK REYES,
mar_marc@hotmail.com

Ayala: Glorietta blast not caused by gas buildup

From page A1

jured more than a hundred, Ayala said. "At this point, we don't want to add additional hypotheses."

Tuvera cut the assessment of Stephen Hirschfield, a chartered scientist of the United Kingdom's Science Council and an expert on leakage, and Bergeman, an international consulting firm specializing in forensic probes of fires, explosions and engineering failure.

Tuvera wrote some of their findings (emphasis used for brevity):

• Methane, one of two components of biogas, could not have been produced since it takes microorganisms 8 to 10 days to multiply to sufficient quantities. The sewer in the basement ramp pit—where fuel leaked to the city sewers "several times a day."

• The accumulation of biogas, which is 20 percent less dense than air, was unlikely "because it would have vented via the large open accessed leading to the delivery bay that is open to the street."

• Biogas could not have been present because the personnel working in the basement did not smell hydrogen sulfide, which is similar to the odor of rotten eggs, and did not experience nausea, and eye or skin irritation on or before the day of the blast.

• It is unlikely that a gas explosion in the basement would have caused the severe damage observed to the loading bay area because at the time of the blast, the loading bay was open to the street.

• The diesel tank suffered only "minor secondary damage," with its roof the only part remaining in place, which is "entirely consistent with it having been caused as the result of the primary explosion," thus overpressure in the diesel tank "could not have caused the damage."

• Upon turning by a major oil company, the "fluid-point"—or the temperature required for the combustion of vapor from a liquid—of the diesel fuel in the tank was found to be normal at 70 degrees Celsius and within specifications.

Open to other angles

Police said they were keeping an "open mind" on their investigation of the deadly blast and had not ruled out anything, including a terrorist attack.

Asked why the methane gas theory had become the most prominent among all the possible causes of the blast, Director Geary Barias, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said it was because of the "sludge" found in the basement of the mall.

Barias thanked ALI for furnishing the Philippine National Police with a copy of its statement on its own findings before meeting the press.

The National Bureau of Investigation also said it remained "open" to other angles should the evidence present itself although it stood by the gas explosion theory of the PNP.

Rolando Asis, chief of the NBI Intelligence Division, said the bureau had not completely dispelled other possibilities in the probe of the Glorietta 2 blast. The NBI is part of the PNP-led task force investigating the explosion.

Asis said the NBI probe was to focus over-lapping materials like electrical devices recently retrieved from the basement were still under analysis.

Busted line

Asked to comment on the photos of a busted line retrieved from the basement, which some believe epitomized the explosion, Jose Tumbocon, president of Ayala Property Management Corp., said it was just a piece of old equipment.

"The fuse line shown in the papers recently is the line [out] of the old jockey pump, which has already been decommissioned. It is not used anymore and was replaced by a new pump," he said in Filipino.

"It wasn't connected. That was a fuse line from old equipment," he said, adding that it was not near the diesel tank.

At the press conference, Ayala showed a three-dimensional rendering of the basement where the blast was believed to have originated, and pointed out the location of the two sump pits in one corner and the diesel tank a few meters away.

"It is not a septic tank but a transfer pump," he said. Each of the two sump pits, which are 1.5 to 1.8 to 2.25 meters "in no deeper than my own height," were two submersible pumps that discharged the wastewater into the main sewer line, he added.

Ayala said the second pump was for "backup, in case the main pump malfunctioned."

Curve in a beam

Asked to comment on reports that the Philippine Bomb Data Center had discovered the center of the explosion and found a "curve" in a beam that may indicate a bomb, Ayala said: "We were at the site yesterday and we observed the beam in question."

"We understand that authorities are looking at this very carefully and we would encourage them to continue this line of investigation," he said.

Ayala also emphasized the cooperation of private experts invited to assess the explosion that occurred at Glorietta.

"Our findings show that there was quite a bit of pressure created in the basement. At the same time, there was quite a bit of damage in the ground floor area, outside, and in the loading bay area," he said.

"But that is worst. It would have required 20% tons of force or 270 cast to push it up and lift a concrete slab 1.6 meters thick," he said. There was a lot of pressure moving around both in the basement and the ground level," he said.

"If you look at how much structural damage, walls reinforced with concrete ... one expects to feel that if there was really gas explosion in the basement, it would be difficult to explain what happened on the ground floor," he said.

He also reiterated that the company was not negligent in the maintenance of the basement. "Because we are ruling out sentience and diesel fumes as the source of the explosion, we don't think negligence is relevant with respect to these possibilities," he said.

He said that the basement was actually under the direct control of Makati Supermarket, which has a land lease contract with ALI, though both tenant and landlord were responsible for the maintenance of the building.

"ALI and Makati Supermarket are both involved in maintenance procedures. Makati Supermarket contracts a maintenance firm with ALI permits, through the supervise of the Ayala Property Management Corp., technical assistance and supervision of the facilities," Reyes said. With reports from Allison M. Lopez and Nikko Dizon

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Artists urged to condemn . . .

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tual right has been infringed. In a way it's a form of censorship."

Visual artist Nanoleon "Nono" Abrasaldo said: "If your contemplated a work, then stylized it, that's immoral. That's a lack of respect for a work of art. Even if you pay for a work, there should be respect for it."

The Neo-Angono Artists Collective has condemned the alteration to the mural on press freedom removed by the NHC without the group's consent.

The 4.6-by-4.32-foot painting, priced at P900,000, was installed at Headline Restaurant on the third floor of the NPC building at the foot of Jones Bridge in Intramuros, Manila. It was unveiled by President Macapagal-Arroyo on the club's 55th founding anniversary on Oct. 26.

The Presidential Security Group (PSG) in-spected the painting the day before the unveiling, and questioned certain "leftist marks," according to NPC director Joel Ilgos.

This prompted the NPC president, Ifka Maluan, to call the Angono artists to remove the marks. Since none of them were available, he tapped another artist to retouch the marks overnight, Maluan said.

The PSG denied influencing the club to retouch the mural. The mural depicts a man reading a newspaper in the midst of a crowd on a busy street.

The alterations included the replacement of the International Federation of Journalists' statement on a page of the paper being read by the central figure. The statement was painted over with a bird, and the silhouette on the arm of the figure of Andres Bonifacio was changed into a raised hand. The edition is the native Filipino alphabet.

Other changes were:

• Replacing the headline of the newspaper that Jose Rizal is holding, "Pinoy Freedom Fighter's Son Abducted" with "Pinoy Freedom Fight In Dk."

• Altering the faces of Edna Bargas-Cruz and her missing son, Jonas.

• Erasing the name of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines from a banner of demonstrators.

• Making Randy David's hair and mustache longer.

• Painting a beard and a mustache on the face of a man (depicted as columnist Juan Mercado) selling eggs and *balut*, and changing his hair color from white to black.

Rojas said an assistant of a member could do the retouching, but with the "knowledge and permission" of the original artists themselves.

"The final end result must have the impressions and stamp of approval of the artists," he added.

Censorship

Reyes, who read the story and saw the alterations, said he agreed completely with the Angono artists that the alterations were a form of censorship, and showed a lack of respect for the integrity of an artwork.

"They can't take it back because the NPC owns the work. It's enough that they have made a public declaration condemning the act," he said, when asked about recourses of the artists.

On whether the artists could file a case for violation of the Intellectual Property Code, he said: "I can't answer that now. That involves the law. There's a difference between artistic declaration and legal vindication."

Reyes said the alterations introduced by another artist to the mural by the Angono artists "should not be emulated by other groups which commission pieces."

Sign *ng* protest

Abrasaldo, 57, a visual artist since the 1970s, urged all artists to mobilize and sign a manifesto condemning the act.

Reyes said he saw no problem with the NPC proposal for the artists to restore the mural to its original state.

Ilgos had said the artists could freely go to the NPC building and restore the "minor, unproven changes," but the artists rejected this.

After all the alterations, is it still fit for viewing?

"There are two ways of looking at it. For me to say that it's not fit for viewing does not prevent the NPC from displaying it. There's freedom since none of the lessons they made the point dig," Reyes said.

"Since they are the owners, they can display it. But, again, we go back to the position of the artists. The most you can do is make a public declaration that you had violated our personal expression," he said.

Spread the issue

The artists have yet to decide whether to formalize their complaint with the Intellectual Property Office, or file a case against the NPC.

"As of now, the stand of the group is to spread the issue to the artist community and get their support. We want to anchor the issue on intellectual property right violation like it is a text case of (those) rights," said Richard Guppi, Neo-Angono Artists Collective president.

Open to dialogue

The NPC, for its part, has remained open to a dialogue with the artists.

"That's what we've been telling the media should hold a dialogue, and then get [on the mural. I don't want the mural to suffer. The mural is like a child of mine. I was the father, and they gave birth to it," said Ilgos, the project director.

"From Day One, I was with them. It was hard to compromise. The mural is beautiful as it is. I just wished the parents perfected it. There's still room for correction," he added.

Guppi replied: "They have not even called me to show their sincerity."

Bolstering Ilgos said he did not say that it was the PSG guards who ordered the alterations. He also said he wasn't around when the PSG inspected the NPC premises, including the mural, on Oct. 25.

"I was just told [that they were there]. I wasn't there [during the inspection]," he said in a text message.

In an interview with the Inquirer on Saturday, Ilgos said the PSG had found some changes in the painting we added, and discussed the NPC's ask (the Angono artists to restore) them.

"Because the artists were not available, Maluan tapped someone to do the retouching.

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6 find hope at Quezon Memorial Circle

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and 18, respectively.

The social worker told a colleague who informed Quezon City Parks Development Foundation Inc. (QCPDFI) chair Charito Planas.

Planas was touched by the boys' brave admission and asked to meet with them. She felt hope for them because they still had a connection and helped them go back to school.

Now, Jeffrey is at the top of his high school sophomore class at the Cubao Aurora school, while Bernard is taking a vocational course in air conditioning repair.

"We now have plans for our lives," Bernard says in Filipino as Jeffrey nods in assent.

In the past, the boys worked as jeepney barkers at Philcoa and Tandang Sora avenues in Quezon City.

So much distrust

Jeffrey says they used to hate the rich because "they distrust us so much. We go near them and they avoid us."

In one incident, he overheard an overprotective mother tell her young child: "Iyo nawa bata kan, ako'y a matobo." We were always insulted by the rich and looked down upon."

Jeffrey says the few times they ventured indoors they used only the toilets or a hand of rice swimming in bowl or dishes stuck. If they were still hungry, they would steal food from tables inside fast food restaurants or supermarkets left unattended by customers.

Bernard says they usually slept at the circle.

Asked where in the park they used to sleep, he answers in jest: "We have a very big mansion here," gesturing at the restroom behind him.

Their attention turned the "rich" way somehow softened when they met volunteer social workers from Assumption College.

"We need to trust them. We told them that they should enroll us like the other rich people. But they did not give up. They showed us that not all rich people are snobs," Jeffrey says.

It was the Assumption volunteers who introduced them to Child Hope, a nongovernmental organization helping children put off the streets.

Ruth Elaine, Child Hope social worker and student-street education, met the boys early in the year.

Touched by sincerity

Jeffrey and Bernard were so touched by the apparent sincerity of Child Hope, they expressed remorse and confessed to having stolen cellular phones from visitors to the Quezon Memorial Circle. They said they did it to help a third accomplice, who needed the money to buy medicines for a sick parent.

"They really wanted to return the cell phones but since [they had already sold the phones] and had no means of [getting them back] or returning them [to the owners], they said they wanted to change," says Elaine, who arranged the boys' meeting with the QCPDFI chair.

Planas asked the boys what they wanted out of life. Jeffrey said he wanted to finish high school, while Bernard said he wanted to get a job.

Planas learned from Elaine that Jeffrey came from a dysfunctional family and was forced to stop schools because his parents could no longer afford his education.

She offered to send him to Cubao Aurora. During the first few months, she discovered he was a smart boy.

"His grades were not that high then but I told him that if he pulled up his grades, I could get him a scholarship and put him through college," Planas says.

At the end of the third grading period, Jeffrey went to Planas' office with his report card. He was at the top of his class.

"I want to take up civil engineering, then maybe buy myself a mansion," Jeffrey says. Bernard dreams of getting a job and starting a family.

Second chance

Mahalaxmi Inamdar-Michael Burgos, 31, and his common-law wife Jill Cruz, 36, and their 9-month-old daughter Shaira Crystal before life gave them a second chance at the Quezon Memorial Circle.

Burgos used to work as a security guard but lost his job because the agency he belonged to turned out to be operating illegally.

"I could not find a job that would help my family survive. I tried construction work and ended up being a scavenger because without papers, nobody wanted to employ me," says Burgos, adding that the fly-by-night security agency refused to surrender his credentials.

Neither could the couple return to their families who were strongly against the relationship.

"I have my wife and I cannot bear being separated from her," says Burgos, adding that Cruz's family were willing to take her back on condition that she left him.

He then moved from place to place, their belongings in plastic bags, resulting in his ex-Pinay Cry. At one point, they were sleeping at the Luneta when most of their possessions were stolen, prompting them to find a safe place to sleep.

After Maria Crystal was born in February, they moved to the circle. They bargained for alms in the day and slept in the park at night. They did this for three months until a park employee convinced them to approach Planas.

The QCPDFI chair initially offered Burgos a job with the Jeepney line eventually told him to rent one of the rest rooms in the park as a conservatory.

Planas also allowed the homeless family to live in the area's restroom, near the park's food court until they could find a place of their own.

"I now have a source of income and a place to live. ... until we can bounce back," Burgos says.

Planas Planas

Samantha Grace Planas Macedo was abandoned by her mother at the Quezon Memorial Circle when she was just 2 months old. That was in 1980.

Macedo is now considers Planas her mother.

Planas says the child, now 7 years old, has grown up to be a well-rounded individual who is wise beyond her years.

The QCPDFI chair says that although Macedo is not officially in growing back to her biological mother, the little girl is curious about the identity of her parents.

"I told her I know the name of her mother but I cannot tell her because I promised [Planas]," Planas says, adding that the child's mother had called up the QCPDFI at least three times.

Macedo's mother had asked Planas for one thing: "Please take good care of my daughter," Planas says, quoting the mother's letter to her.

She then moved from place to place, their belongings in plastic bags, resulting in her

Across the NATION

GMA allies to hold 'people's congress' against junta plan

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—SUPPORTERS OF President Macapagal-Arroyo in her home province of Pampanga are convening a "People's Congress for Unity and Peace" tomorrow to counter calls to establish a junta on the heels of recent corruption scandals hounding her administration.

"The recent call of [former Vice President] Teofisto Guingona [Jr.] and a few bishops to dismantle the current democratic institutions in favor of a junta is shocking as it is unnerving," said a draft of the congress' manifesto.

Secretary Edgardo Manimtim, chair of the Indio Clark Alliance for Development Council, and Alex Canguilan, chair of the Progressive and Responsive Organization for Genuine Leadership, Outstanding Reform Initiatives and Action (Progila), have initiated the congress, sources said.

Provincial and Congress are both presidential appointees.

In separate interviews, Bondoc and Canguilan said they expected the "reconciliation and peace campaign" to snowball in other parts of the country.

The draft manifesto cited the economic strides made under Ms Arroyo, describing the economy to be "on the upswing."

Even as the congress called for unity, Pampanga's highest official, Gov. Eddie Panlilio, appeared to have been shut out of the event.

Sources said some conveners questioned his presence in the congress owing to his revelation that he received P500,000 in Malacañang on Dec. 11.

"I was not invited to the congress. If they were really calling for unity as they claimed, why did they not invite me or others who can live in unity-building," Panlilio, a Catholic priest on leave, said.

San Fernando Mayor Oscar Rodriguez has asked that his name be removed from the list of conveners because, according to an official close to him, the official had objected to a statement in the congress' draft.

The source said Rodriguez felt that Panlilio was among those being alluded to by this statement: "It also saddens us that here in Pampanga, certain personalities have allowed themselves, either out of naivete or ambition, to be part of this despicable."

Asked whether he was supporting Ms Arroyo, Panlilio said: "I am pro-truth, I am run as an independent and I wanted to maintain my independence. I respect their decision to show support for the President because that's the action of some of our kababayan [provincemates]. That's understandable."

He added: "I am definitely against a million jueteng because the Congress of Provinces of the (Philippines) in its last caucus instructed that we would follow the rule of law [in the latest impeachment try against the President]. I think that is the more appropriate process."

Candaba Mayor Jerry Delayo, spokesperson of the Pampanga Mayors' League, said Panlilio had been invited to the congress.

"Nobody's up names-ayan. Lahat in mind dun. (We're waiting for him. Everybody is invited.) It is for unity," he said.

At he the past in the statement that alluded to Panlilio, Delayo said: "The ang mag-desik nun. Hide you. Hide you. (It was drafted by another person. That part is not there anymore.)," Kimberly Dreyfus, Inquirer.net/Cristel Lazon

Antimining bloc sweeps polls in 6 southern Palawan villages

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—ANTIMINING candidates in last week's barangay elections swept preminding rivals in an intensely fought contest in Brooke's Point, Palawan, where two large-scale nickel mining projects are starting out.

Campaigning on a platform to oppose the projects, the antimining bloc won in all six barangays covered by mining projects of Macrohon Corp. and Ipilan Nickel Mining Corp., according to Vice Mayor Jean Feliciano.

Feliciano, herself installed by antimining votes in the May polls, told the Inquirer that the barangay elections were "moot in terms" in areas where the mining companies were operating.

Both Macrohon and Ipilan were on the exploration stage and needed local endorsements of their projects to secure permits.

"We won by a landslide in Ipilan and edged the incumbent preminding candidate in Maasin by a single vote. It was a triumph of public resolve to protect the environment," Feliciano said.

Ipilan, the largest barangay with over 3,000 registered voters and host to Ipilan Nickel Mining Corp., a subsidiary of Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp., voted overwhelmingly for an antimining crusader, Jonathan Legaspi, who stood up against incumbent and Association of Barangay Captains chair Efren Balmonte.

Balmonte earlier led a petition to block the declaration of Mt. Bloomfields, him as a protected area, a move which Feliciano claimed was instigated by mining companies which wanted to set research into the reserve for their future operations.

A Tagbanua indigenous leader, Pangloma Quirino Enriquez, won in Barangay Simpoc, also a mining site of Ipilan Nickel.

"The mining companies did everything to retain the incumbent barangay captains whom they have coopted to support the mining projects," Feliciano claimed.

The success asked Macrohon's vice president for mining operations, Pedro Cabanilla, to comment on the poll outcome in Brooke's Point but got no response. *Reckenpeter Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

LANTERNS FROM PRISON Christmas lanterns made by prisoners of the Aklan provincial jail are sold in Barangay Tagas, Ibajay, Aklan for P50-P400 each.

Group, tribe leader hail mining moratorium

CITY OF MATI, DAVAO ORIENTAL—An environmentalist group and leader of the Mandaya tribe hailed the decision of Gov. Corazon Malanyaon to impose a mining moratorium in Lupon and Baganga towns.

"It is the best thing to do—to impose mining moratorium in these areas...to stop the violence. We fully support the move of Governor Malanyaon," said Fr. Michaelo Salomon, head of environmental group Interfaith Movement for Peace Empowerment and Development which actively opposed the entry of large-scale mining companies in this city.

"The moratorium order will restore peace and order to these areas. And the people need support it," Salomon added.

Abdulaja Tocson, a leader of the Mandaya, said the order had significantly stopped the violence in the mining areas.

Malanyaon issued the order to stop the "anarchy" that cost the lives of many people who go after each other for gold and nickel.

"We really have to put a stop to the ongoing anarchy in these minerals rich towns," Malanyaon said. *Ferdinand Pancada, Inquirer Mindanao*

3 dead, 7,000 families displaced in Sulu fire

JOLO CITY—THREE PERSONS were killed while several others were injured in a fire that destroyed more than 1,000 houses in Barangay Tulay in this city, leaving an estimated 7,000 families homeless, on Saturday afternoon.

Sheikha Jainab Abdulmajid, Sulu disaster coordinating council chief, said two Muslim women were among those injured.

Abdulmajid said 7,000 families were displaced from the affected areas of Sitio Poblacion, North Land and South Land.

A gasoline station was among those razed. Undersecretary Ausilhadar Ambolodto of the Office of the President-ial Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) for Mindanao, Sulu and Tawi-tawi, reported.

Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Ibañez, Task Force Comet chief, said military patrol boats were dispatched to help evacuate the injured victims.

An emergency medical team was also organized to help the burn victims, Ambolodto said.

Ibañez said that based on initial investigation, the fire started from a still-selling gasoline.

The lack of water supply contributed to the difficulty in putting off the fire, he said.

Sending more firefighters from other towns was also difficult as Jolo, an island town, is about three hours of travel from Zulo, officials said. *Jaha Adjanda, Inquirer Mindanao*

2,000 troops beef up anti-NPA drive

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE ARMY'S 3rd Infantry Division has deployed around 2,000 troops, including 1,000 reinforcements, in the Visayas to beef up its campaign against communist rebels.

Maj. Gen. Juvenal Nuevas, commander of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, said seven companies of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) with 2,000 personnel would be deployed to three provinces in the region.

The division will also deploy at least two battalions in Negros Island as part of its plan to crush the insurgency before 2010. A battalion is composed of around 500 soldiers.

The unit covers the islands of Panay, Negros, Bohol, Cebu and Siquijor, but Negros is considered a top priority in the Army's counterinsurgency operations in the Visayas.

West Cafgu companies will also be deployed in Negros Occidental, two companies in Bohol and a company in Cebu, Nuevas said.

The military had just completed a four-month Basic Military Training at the 3rd ID headquarters at Camp Macario Peralta in Jamindan, Capiz.

Nuevas said their places of assignment were the main priority in the internal security operations of the 3rd ID for 2007 until next year.

Panay is considered a secondary priority.

Nuevas said Negros accounts for half of the 12 New People's Army (NPA) bases in Central and Western Visayas. Panay has four guerrilla fronts while Cebu and Bohol blanch have one each, he said.

The military units will maximize the military's personnel to prevent declared "cleared" from rebel influence so that the regular troops and institutions can be mobilized to other rebel-influenced areas.

The 3rd ID units to "clear" northern Cebu of its remaining NPA Front Committee by the end of the year and clear Front Committee in Bohol within the period.

A Cafgu company will then be deployed on Northern Cebu and two companies in Bohol, he said.

The 3rd ID on June deployed around 300 troops at their equivalent to a battalion of soldiers in Western and Central Visayas.

An additional 361 soldiers were sent to Negros, 140 to Cebu and Bohol, and 173 to Panay.

NPA rebels have stepped up their offensives in recent years, including attacks on mill sites and raids on town halls and isolated military and police posts.

In Saravgon, the NPAs Jose Kapanig Command in Madiaia ensured up on the Oct. 20 attack on the Globe cell site on Tuna Island in the province.

Arrested Mel Sibang, who introduced himself as the command spokesperson of NPA Madiaia, said it was part of a nationwide campaign of the rebel group.

On Oct. 13, NPA rebels raided and torched a Globe Telecommunications cell site in Camarines Sur. With a report from Bobby Lalinday, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Newsbriefs

Village chair killed in Isabela

ILAGAN, ISABELA—A village chair was shot and killed by suspected communist rebels on Oct. 30 in San Mariano town. Chief Insp. Antonio Mandag-ar, provincial police investigation and intelligence chief, said Dibuluan village chair Nonilon Collado died from three bullet wounds in the head and body. The official was attacked by suspected New People's Army rebels in his house.

Collado was serving his third term and did not run for any position in the Oct. 29 barangay elections, reports said. In a statement, Vic Ballig, spokesperson of the NPA's Reynaldo Pelton Command, said rebels killed Collado for "blood debts to the people." *Wilson Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Oil depots in commercial area

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Giant oil firms Chevron, Petron and Shell have asked the city government for a 10-year extension of their oil depots in Barangay Dadiangas.

Under the city's zoning ordinance passed in 1999, Bolaowan identified as a commercial area. Within the passage of the ordinance, the oil depots were considered relics and that this oil companies were given until March next year to relocate.

Mark Quetmol, spokesperson for Chevron, warned that the closure of the depots would affect fuel supply in many Central Mindanao areas.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. said the city government is mobilized by law to enforce the ordinance. *Apollo J. Zuno, Inquirer Mindanao*

Diarrhea outbreak in Davao Sur; 6 dead

DON MARCELINO, DAVAO DEL SUR—Almost six children, aged 4 to 6 years, have died since Oct. 28 as government officials continued to cope with a diarrhea outbreak in several villages here.

Mayor John Johnson said 80 others were affected by the disease that could have been caused by contaminated water. Most of the victims were residents of the hinterland village of Lumidan, which is predominantly populated by Manobo and Tagakaolo tribes.

Dr. Sunem Trinidad, a physician at the Malita district hospital, said he had ordered the municipal health office to trace the source of the disease to prevent more people from getting ill. *Orlando Dilay, Inquirer Mindanao*

3 nabbed for marijuana

SULOP, DAVAO DEL SUR—Three persons were arrested here on Tuesday after police authorities found marijuana plants inside the compound they were staying in.

Sulop police chief Insp. Wilfredo Kasuma said that aside from the five large green marijuana plants, the suspects also yielded packets of dried marijuana flakes.

Kasuma said charges had already been filed against the suspects, who were detained at the town jail. *Orlando Dilay, Inquirer Mindanao*

Water rates up in Misamis Occ.

OZAMIZ CITY—Water rates in Misamis Occidental have gone up by P50 effective Oct. 1, the fourth increase in six years.

Within the increase, a minimum consumption of 10 cubic meters per month now costs P220 from its beginning level of P180.

Ferdinand Pandin, general manager of the Ozamiz Residential Water City and Environs Administration (ORWA), the government agency that regulates the operation of water districts nationwide.

He said ORWA needs to transfer fresh funds so it could pay the interest and amortization on its P3-million loan from the ZNLA. *Ryan Rosario, Inquirer Mindanao*

Minister's killer facing homicide raps

DUMAGUETE CITY—Police authorities in Negros Oriental have filed homicide charges against the confessed killer of a Jesus is Lord Movement minister last week.

Ronnie Arong, of Barangay Piapi, was also a member of the JIL Movement, surrendered to police, claiming his conscience had been bothering him.

His confession to the Oct. 29 killing of Lt. minister Martin Arong said he declared to say what pushed him to commit the crime.

Arong's body, which had multiple stab wounds, was found inside the JIL retreat house in Bais City. *Jhaira G. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

3 arrested for theft in Laguna

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Three men were arrested shortly after they reportedly broke into the house of a wealthy businessman in a subdivision in Sta. Rosa City on Thursday.

Supt. Gerigo Simondal, spokesperson of the Calabarzon police, said police confiscated from the suspects a 9-mm pistol, several cellphones, knives and a motorcycle allegedly used in the robberies activity.

Simondal said the three were members of a band called Mga Batang Kalye syndicate whose modus operandi was to ransack houses left by their occupants.

The suspects are detained at the Sta. Rosa police jail while cases of robbery, illegal possession of firearms and violation of the election gun ban are being prepared against them. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Truck falls off Bacungan bridge; 1 killed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—A driver was killed while two agents of the police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) based here were seriously hurt when the truck they were riding fell off a bridge in San Jose, Batangas, on Oct. 31.

Batangas police director Senior Supt. David Gomez identified the fatality as Reynaldo Libid Jr., of Kumintang Kalsada, Batangas City.

Injured were PO2 Edwin Castro, a member of the CIDG-Calabarzon, and Ronald Hipolonia, an SPO4 civilian agent.

Some said David was trapped between the overturned metal part of the truck and debris on the spot.

It took more than two hours before firemen and rescuers plucked Castro and Hipolonia out of the vehicle, he said. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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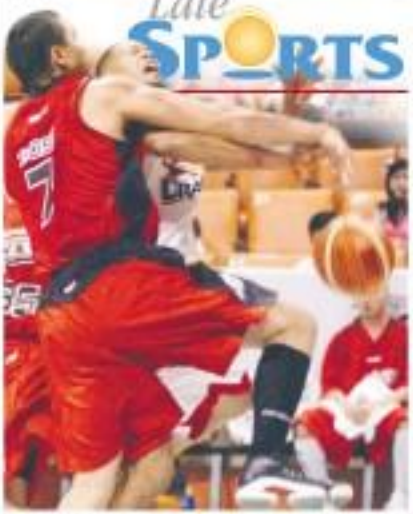


ALASKA Aces' Sonny Thoss makes sure Welcoat's Rob Wainright won't escape his defense in yesterday's PBA game at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Tempers flare as Giants rout Ginebra Kings

By Jun Navarro

THE PUREFOODS TJ GIANTS SURVIVED a brutal encounter against the Barangay Ginebra Kings before running away with a 100-75 victory to keep their unbeaten record in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Steve Jaime Bonsen scored most of his 27 points in the final half to rip the game wide open after the Giants endured several technical fouls, an ejection and a fistfight brought about by several low-go plays.

Branded Cubby of Purefoods and Arnold Tolosa of Ginebra tangled on the floor following a wayward elbow that hit Cubby on the knee with the Giants ahead, 96-56, with eight minutes remaining in the third period.

Officials and players from both sides intervened to stop the melee, which could fetch a slew of suspensions and fines.

With a fifth straight triumph, Purefoods eclipsed its previous record of winning the first four games of the conference accomplished 16 years ago when most of the players were still learning the fundamentals of the game.

"It's nice to be a part of history but there's no reason for us to be pitchers," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio. "There's still so much to be done to get us to the championship."

The Kings, who lost their fourth straight for 1-4 record, lost Mark Macapagal, who was ejected for complaining excessively following a non-call by the referees late in the stunt.

Earlier, the Alaska Aces pounced on the sluggish Welcoat lance and the rest of the Beermen Dragons to carve out a methodical 73-60 win.

Bonsen came up with his career output so far against his former team, tallying only four points on 1-of-5 shooting.

FOR THE RECORD

ALASKA (73)—Miller 14, Semerad 11, Quinahan 8, Lanete 8, Yeng 6, Jumamoy 6, Pogoy 6, Custodio, Wong 4, Tapat 2, Salado 2.

WELCOAT (60)—Wainwright 18, De Ocampo 11, Pascual 10, Ayaay 7, Arana 6, Bolanos 4, Erram 3, Ramos 1, Magsanoc, Dela Rosa, Quiambao.

Quarters: 18-15, 40-33, 60-51, 73-60.

TODAY'S GAMES

PUREFOODS TJ—Bonsen 27, Asaytono 10, Yap 12, Reyes 6, Cubay 7, Lanete 6, Sanz 5, Salvador 5, Hrbiniak 4, Pingris 4, Hsu 6, Yeo 4.

GINEBRA (75)—Tolosa 21, Ramos 12, Fermin 8, Arnold 6, Macapagal 6, Ingles 5, Yapmanterich 5, Cruzada, Abarquez 3, Reed 2, Lassiter.

Quarters: 19-16, 31-30, 57-51, 100-75.

Tigresses enter semis; Lyceum remains in hunt

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS CLAIMED the third semifinal seat yesterday, beating archfoes Adamson, 25-15, 17-25, 25-18, 25-23, in the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's collegiate second conference at The Arena in San Juan.

The first conference champion's Lyzanch Venus Bernal and Shiny Jean Rubio teamed in 17 and 16 points, respectively, as the Tigresses joined the host Arellano Lady Stags and Ateneo Lady Eagles in the three-player semifinals with their 4-1 slate.

Adamson dropped to 2-3, failing for the second straight game to make the semis outright.

Lyceum, needing a victory to stay in the hunt, topped also-ran Letran in the opener, 8-25, 25-20, 25-17, 25-22, 15-13.

It was only the Lady Pirates' second victory in six games but it kept them in the race for one of the two remaining semi berths.

For Lyceum to force at least a playoff for the last Final-four seat, it must beat UST in its final elimination assignment on Friday, Nov. 9, and hope that Adamson drops its final match to La Salle on Nov. 13.

An automatic semis seat also awaits the Lady Pirates if they beat the Tigresses and the Lady Archers lose at least two of their last three matches.

The Lady Pirates resurrected from a slow start by taking the second and third sets and appeared headed for a routine five win until the Lady Knights fought back to send the match into a deciding set.

UST's Bahe

Philippines Hosts Cities Alliance Forum

Participants from member countries and organizations, local government units, national government agencies, non-government organizations and people organizations will gather in Manila for the 8th Cities Alliance Public Policy Forum hosted by the Philippines through the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

The Forum is the Cities Alliance's venue for engaging city practitioners, national government representatives, development partners and the research community to discuss the challenges and opportunities of an urbanizing world.

This year, the Forum centers on the theme "Leveraging Resources for Liveable Cities"

The three-day event kicks off with a dinner-reception at the Malacañang Palace on November 5 hosted by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Opening Ceremonies at the Crowne Plaza Ballroom Manila will be preceded by the CA members' site visits to housing projects in Muntinlupa City, Marikina City, and Calamba, Laguna.

The Forum proper will focus on three main topics: the City Development Strategies Program (CDS); Mainstreaming Access to Financing for Local Authorities and Stakeholders for Urban Development and Slum Upgrading and Redevelopment; Collaboration and Leveraging Mechanisms.

Vice President Noli De Castro, chairman of the HUDCC, said the Forum provides a great opportunity for the Philippine cities and people's organizations to link up with prospective development partners.

"This event should be a very fruitful one, especially for the leaders of our local government units, who stand to gain valuable knowledge on how to access resources for development, and how best to use these to improve our cities and uplift the lives of the poor," he said.

The resolutions raised from the forums, to be called the Manila Declaration, will be presented by the Vice President.

The forum is co-sponsored by the Cities Alliance, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the UN-Habitat and the League of Cities of the Philippines.

The Cities Alliance is a global coalition of cities and their development partners committed to scaling up successful approaches to poverty reduction. This alliance supports, through grants, such initiatives as the City Development Strategies (CDS); citywide and nationwide slum upgrading, in accordance with its Cities Without Slums action plan, and sustainable financing facilities for cities.

For more information, visit www.citiesalliance.org.

MESSAGES

Warmest welcome to the participants in the 2007 Cities Alliance Public Policy Forum hosted by the Philippines.

This event comes at an opportune time for our country, as the Philippines grapples with its efforts to bring inclusive growth, sustainable development and sustainable livelihood to our People, even especially in the Asian Area.

As the country's fastest urbanizing countries in transition, we are actively taking our efforts to fight poverty and uplift the lives of the Filipino people. And while the fruits of our labor are not yet fully felt by the majority of our people, we have made significant headway in addressing the problem of underdevelopment by providing better access to thousands of our countrymen.

This will be a rich opportunity to share knowledge and information among member countries and development partners to make an impact on the Philippine cities, and to help address the challenges of urbanization in the region as a whole. Our fellow participants in the Forum, including the representatives of cities from Cambodia and Indonesia, are examples of the many cities we can learn from the experiences of other cities, and to which we can also share our own.

With my warm welcome to the participants,

Mabuhay,

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

The Philippines takes pride in being a member of the Cities Alliance, the Consultative Group of the Philippines on Urban Development, together with the housing and urban development coordinating council and the government of the Philippines and local governments. As such, we are proud that this year's meeting of the Cities Alliance Public Policy Forum and Governors' Day Joint will be hosted here in Pasay City.

The League of Cities of the Philippines has been privileged over the Cities Alliance through the City Development Strategies (CDS) process. Through the CDS, cities are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as their strategic potentials in building an economically competitive and socially inclusive city. The CDS process also helps local governments to consult with their constituents, with the resulting visions of society reflecting the aspirations of the people. Through the CDS process, cities are enabled to act decisively based on the broad consensus that they have among urgent Philippine issues.

With this theme, Leveraging Resources for Liveable Cities, we are confident that the Forum will provide a fertile ground for sharing best practices, lessons learned, and innovative financing mechanisms for urban projects on urban development and slum upgrading. The experiences of cities such as Cebu City, Marikina City, Puerto Princesa City, together with our colleagues from other cities in the world, will bring to the City Development Strategies (CDS) process through the support of the Cities Alliance. While some cities, such as Cebu, have already undergone the CDS process, many others are still undertaking it. We are confident that the information exchanged in the Forum will help cities in their CDS process.

We are optimistic that this Forum will provide a fertile ground for discussion and policy formulation towards the creation of liveable cities throughout the Philippines.

Mabuhay!

BENJAMIN C. MELLO, JR.
President
League of Cities of the Philippines

On behalf of the World Bank, it is my pleasure to welcome delegates to the 2007 Cities Alliance Forum in the Cities Alliance. I am pleased that the meeting is taking place in Manila where we have been honored by the support we have received from President Gloria Arroyo.

As the world becomes increasingly urbanized, global issues become increasingly visible in local communities. Poverty, pollution, climate change, natural disasters, violence and terrorism are the principal challenges we face. Urban safety and security, the impact of climate change, and damage to urban heritage are all issues that matter.

More favorable and often more effective trade challenges are being managed at the local level. This is why the World Bank, in collaboration with the Cities Alliance, decided to put greater focus on urban development and poverty reduction in cities. Cities are where we can make the biggest economic impact, the environment and provide opportunities for all citizens.

This meeting provides a welcome opportunity for the Cities Bank and its partners to the Cities Alliance to reinforce our collective commitment to urban development, to share experiences, and to recognize the accomplishments of our partners in the Philippines. I wish you all a very successful Policy Forum.

Katherine Sierra
Vice President, Sustainable Development
The World Bank

The Philippines is pleased and honored to be given the opportunity to host this year's Cities Alliance Public Policy Forum. We welcome this event not just as a chance to demonstrate our Filipino hospitality to our guests but, more importantly, as a venue for gaining greater support from the Alliance's members for the development efforts of our cities.

The experience of a growing a number of Philippine cities in implementing successful programs to address the problems associated with rapid urbanization is showing us the big difference that good leadership can make when associated with the participation of the people and the strong support of the right partners.

It is my hope that our local leaders will make the most of this forum as an opportunity to learn more about the proven strategies and the options that are open to them, and to establish ties with potential partners. This can be a good running point for many of our cities towards the path to livability, sustainable growth and a better life for all their citizens.

Above all, I hope this will inspire Filipinos to realize that progress is achievable in our cities and in our entire country, if we can get our acts together.

Mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President

Warm greetings to all our partners in the Philippines!

The Cities Alliance – Public Policy Forum makes the theme "Leveraging Resources for Livable Cities" to highlight financing and efforts in the new urban agenda, which is the management of the challenges and opportunities of urbanization and urban development.

Currently, we are at the cusp of a new urban era where more than half of the world's population will reside in urban areas. We find ourselves in a world where cities are home to more than one billion people. In many cities, slums may run from outskirts of the world, like Rio de Janeiro, Nairobi, Mumbai, Manila, and Jakarta. Many of these cities are found in developing countries.

Just a month ago on October 1, the World Habitat Day celebration included the Habitat Lecture by Dr. Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, on the theme "Cities and Climate Change: Responding to an Urgent Agenda". He said that the world is now in the midst of a new urban era with half of humanity, already living in towns and cities. It is projected that, by 2030, that figure will rise to two thirds. On a historical run in the urban age, it took the global number of dwellers to rise one billion from 1800 to 1900. It took another 100 years for the number to rise one billion more to top the 2 billion mark. In many cities, slums may run from outskirts of the world, like Rio de Janeiro, Nairobi, Mumbai, Manila, and Jakarta. Many of these cities are found in developing countries. We are about to add a fifth billion in the next 12 years. This rapidly growing urbanization can present challenges for urban governments as it presents an opportunity for urban development. We are witnessing a good quality of life and economic productivity in our cities, from employment and public infrastructure. Indeed, livable cities are safe and just cities.

The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) has come into focus as a unique source of information in the urban and shelter sectors. Good urban experiences and knowledge on how to face the evolving challenges of our rapidly urbanizing world. We are committed to work with our partners in the Cities Alliance as well as governments and technical organizations in answering the call in making our cities livable through the strategic developing of our principles and solutions to overcome.

Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
UN-HABITAT Deputy Executive Director

The Homeless as a Catalyst for Urban Development

The Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines is proving that the poor can be agents of change in their cities by building up their own resources and, in the process, gaining the leverage to access more.

When Gloria Calderonjon's family, along with some 400 others, faced the grim prospect of being evicted from their homes in Iloilo City—built on land that they did not own—they had two choices: fight it out in court with the police clearing completely of the land, or start looking for a new place.

With the landowner having more resources than the mostly low-income families for a long court battle, and fear of them losing the means to buy their own land, they sought another solution.

"Years when we started organizing ourselves," she says. With the help of the Visayan Educational Social Development Foundation, they formed a community association with the objective of building up their own resources through a daily savings program.

At that time a community savings program was already in place in Payatas, Quezon City, where the Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines (HPFP) traces its roots. "I was sent there to look at how the families are saving. This is not women having because the poor don't have that. This is money that they can decide to be made liquid for housing, livelihood and other needs," Gloria recalls.

Armed with the knowledge and inspiration gained from the experienced savings/loan communities of Payatas, she went back to Iloilo to help set up their own savings program.

Eventually, they saved up enough funds to buy their own land—a foreclosed property, which they acquired directly from the Bank of Philippine Islands. They were no longer homeless.

That was just the beginning. Soon, she is now HPFP Regional Coordinator for the Visayas and Board Member of the Work Dwelling Intermediary—a network of urban poor associations in 27 countries—has since then helped over 1,000 families acquire the same or different sites, all rooted in its savings program.

"We start with savings, then we engage the government," she says, backed by their own resources and the experience from self-initiated projects, the Federation's members have more leverage in pursuing the assistance of the local government.

"We need the government, but at the start we are what we can. This way, they can't just dismiss us and say we are just like any other group that wants to access funds from the government. But we submit to the local budget cycle: how can you help us with the basic services? That is better than asking your mayor to give land location," she says.

This approach at negotiation instead of confrontation has given farmers groups a favorable standing with the Iloilo City government, as in the case in which cities' shares from the national tax allotment, along with separate organizations, has become part of the city's structure.

Having their own resources also opens doors for the Federation to access loans, whether in the form of funding or assistance from other sectors. Their organization's experience and track record as a the kind of donor organizations and other people.

A new project to be undertaken in Iloilo under the Philippines Land Infrastructure Finance Facility (LIFF) of the Cities Alliance supports other this.

"Through the Slum Dwellers Organization, we were able to acquire funds of the Land Infrastructure Finance Facility (LIFF)," Calderonjon says. The beneficiaries are informal settlers among the low-income who will be affected by the city's foreign-funded flood control project. The bank is being provided by the government, while development of the land—which is adjacent to the city's port—will depend on the flood control project. The LIFF funds will be used for housing, with each family getting a P150,000 loan.

It's a controversial but process established by the Federation, but out of all its projects. Every detail—from the design of the houses, the internal rules, the repayment terms—is discussed. The participatory process ensures that the beneficiaries will be happy with the project once it begins.

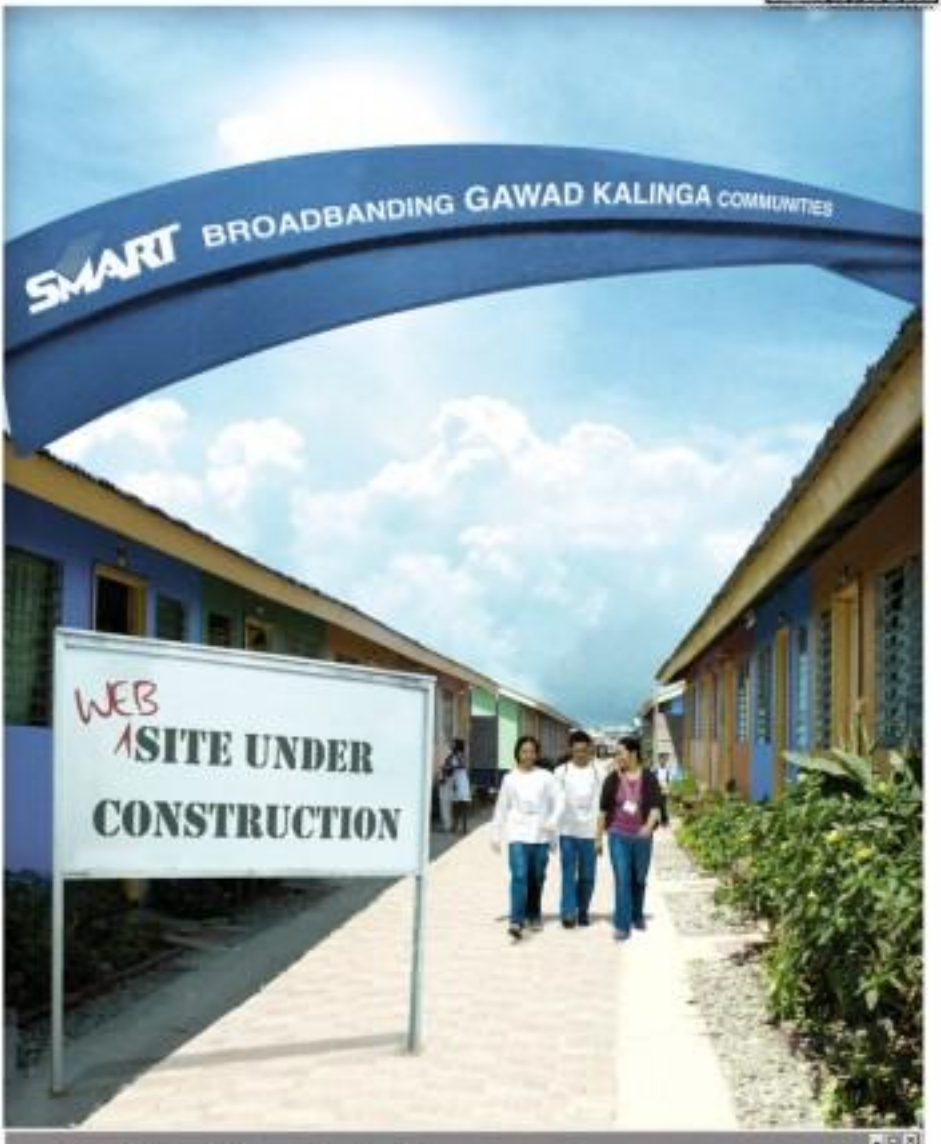
How it worked that by Loans formed was the Federation at work in the selection of the informal settlers from which that. "The HPFP has been a big change in my perspective on the settlers and seeing the real idea of relocation, knowing the fact that they have to start saving, prioritizations after living for free in their homes along the railroad tracks," he recalls.

"When other groups were looking on the appointments of the affected families and starting doubt in the HPFP helped them organize in order to ensure the best possible terms for their relocation. That's different. They are more organized, more cooperative, helped us, and certainly helped those families," he adds.

By giving poor communities the capacity to consider contributions the resources of the community, "the Federation is also promoting a dialogue among—creating a sense of dignity and responsibility in them.

For the HPFP, the next can—and should—lead things on their own instead of leaving this government, or waiting for the central decision. Their point of view is, it would be good if the government would provide the details of the land, but for those things that it cannot do immediately for any reason, the poor themselves have to act. "If your community in Bacolod, you need to act for the poor to accommodate a leverage option. It could take too long, and meanwhile you are the one who suffers every time it rains. Through savings, you can do it yourself," says Gloria.

In this way, the poor have a greater hand in determining not just their own future, but their city's as well. "We can do it if we want to, we just have to overcome our struggles."



From Building Homes to Creating Homepages

Under the Broadbanding GK Communities project of SMART, the 14 regional centers of Gawad Kalinga will be connected to its head office in Mandaluyong via SMART's wireless broadband service, Smart Bro.

This is the initial phase of a project to connect GK communities all over the country to each other and to the world. Linked through high-speed Internet, these communities will have access to online information and education services and be able to communicate with their partners here and abroad through e-mail, chat, webcam and other broadband services. Eventually, this will assist GK communities in undertaking various self-help projects including education and health programs, disaster-preparedness and livelihood projects.

As GK villages become connected, the word "home" takes a new meaning for its residents as they create home pages and open windows of opportunities. Those online communities will overcome barriers and strengthen the bayanihan spirit that is Gawad Kalinga.

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SMART GAWAD KALINGA

Nagkakaisa sa serbisyong tunay

A PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

"As GK communities become connected to the rest of the world, new opportunities will arise for our countrymen. Dahil dito, kami sa Gawad Kalinga ay natutuwang ipagpatuloy ang pakikipagbayanihan sa SMART."

Tony Meloto, GK Builder

"With GK communities broadbanded, it becomes easier for them to connect to each other, to their partners, volunteers here and overseas. This is bayanihan online."

Napoleon L. Nazareno, President & CEO, PLDT and SMART

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester C. Dipasupil

Kidnap suspect to cops: Hunger made me do it

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

POLICE TOOK INTO CUSTODY A WOMAN who tried to kidnap a young boy who was with his father inside a stadium in Quezon City yesterday morning.

The boy's father, Hector Carlos, a resident of Cluster 25, Sumulong Timber, said the incident happened while he and his 3-year-old son, John Benedict, were jogging inside the Amoranto Stadium on Roces Avenue at 7 a.m.

Carlos said that when his son stopped to tie his shoelaces, he kept on jogging, thinking John Benedict would soon catch up with him.

Moments later, Carlos realized that his son was still not beside him and was nowhere to be seen on the jogging path.

He immediately alerted the security guards in the stadium who started looking for John Benedict.

Not long after, a woman was spotted near the main gate of the establishment. She was carrying the boy who was later returned to his father.

The woman was brought to the Quezon City Police District Station 14 where she identified herself as Yolanda Laganzoviscio, 46, a resident of Sta. Ana, Manila.

Asked why she took the boy, Laganzoviscio told the heiress that she wanted to sell him to make some money. She added that she was very hungry and she had to do something to be able to buy some food.

The suspect is detained at the QCPD-Station 14 for further investigation. Authorities said they would have her checked to determine her mental state.

If proven to be mentally unbalanced, she would be placed in a mental health institution. Otherwise, she would be charged with attempted abduction of a minor, the police added.

FURRY VISITOR
A group of women takes notice of a cat which is resting on a tombstone a few meters away from them at the Himlayang Pilipino in Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

BPI to WORLD
BACK-TO-BACK AWARDS

On two different occasions, the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) was hailed by two prestigious International Financial Institutions, namely the Bank of America as the Best Payments Partner Bank in the Philippines and the Bank of New York as the Outstanding Payment Forwarding and Straight-Through Rate Settlement Bank for all Foreign Outward Payments Transactions.

BPI achieved a remarkable Straight Through Process (STP) rate of 99.03% with Bank of America and 97% with Bank of New York for the full year of 2006. This is above the 90% standard rate and indicates BPI's very high level of accuracy in forwarding payments, says Daniel Sheridan, managing director and regional manager for Global Payments and Trade Services of the Bank of New York. BPI has been awarded by Bank of America for the fourth consecutive year and the latter for the third consecutive year.

These awards were given based on STP rates via reliable processed that signifies BPI's leadership at the forefront of innovative services as it recently unveiled the BPI TO WORLD Money Transfer-the fast and convenient way to effect payments worldwide.

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Lim offers free rehab to drug users in Manila

By Allison W. Lopez

DRUG DEPENDENTS FROM Manila's slums can get a new lease on life with the opening of a rehabilitation center in Sta. Cruz today.

Mayor Alfredo Lim will launch the new Manila Treatment and Rehabilitation Center inside the North University complex at the corner of Dr. Jasmin Extension and Blumentritt Street.

The center will provide free treatment to drug users. Private rehabilitation facilities, on the other hand, charge as much as P40,000 to P60,000 per person.

According to Lim, drug addicts are victims who need to be rehabilitated to allow them to return to the mainstream of society.

"We will run after the drug pushers and dealers but not the users because they are only victims who need help," he stressed.

City administrator Jesus Mari Marcelo said that Lim had opened a drug rehab center during his term but this was shut down by his successor who converted the facility into an armory center.

The old drug rehab center, he added, had room for thousands of residents and even non-residents who were addicted to illegal drugs, all free of charge.

The new center will accommodate only male patients for now.

Dr. Enrique Ramcote will head the all-male team of nurses and specialists who will provide comprehensive rehabilitation services using multidisciplinary techniques.

The center aims to make its patients drug-free to enable them to rejoin their community and engage in productive activities.

City health officer Marie Lorraine M. Sanchez said the center is part of the city government's campaign against illegal drugs.

"The mayor's crusade is multifaceted—from law enforcement, judicial prosecution to treatment and rehabilitation of victims of drug abuse, for which the Manila Treatment and Rehabilitation Center is being established," she said.

APPEAL TO OPEN QC BRIDGE

Ramonth Zamora Jr. of Delta Village, Tandang Sora, Quezon City writes: "A concrete bridge was constructed years back by the city government on Tuazon Street, Corner V Sulit Street to interconnect Barangay Tandang Sora and Barangay Sauyo. The project is laudable as it would cut travel time and conserve the use of fuel. However, the bridge is open only at certain hours to the detriment of motorists who use the bridge as a shortcut route. Pilot we appeal to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. through the City engineer's office, to permanently open this bridge in accordance with the existing ordinance. Thank you."

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR
Municipality of Vigan

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Nov. 2, 2007

The Provincial Government of Ilocos Sur through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), hereby invites prospective contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following projects:

Project Description	Source of Fund	ABC
1. Purchase and Delivery of Assorted Agricultural Equipment, as enumerated in the Annex "A"	71-GAD Budget (Balance)	Php 10,000,000.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking similar projects for the last 2 years with an amount of contract of 25% of the proposed project or more. Thoroughly understand the Philippine Bidding Documents (PBDs) as contained in Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is stated as follows. (Single stage bidding)

BAC Activities	Schedules
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Nov. 12-16, 2007 (8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.)
2. Pre-bid Conference	Nov. 12, 2007 (10:00 A.M. Ilocos Norte Conf. Room)
3. Receipt & Opening of Bids	Nov. 19, 2007 (10:00 A.M. Ilocos Norte Conf. Room)

Bid Documents will be available only to the bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of Php 1,000.00 to the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

The Provincial Government of Ilocos Sur reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality or defect in any bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

Engr. CESAR T. FERNANDEZ
BAC Chairman

BAC Secretariat (2007)

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Tel. No. 234-5678

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The Davao City Water District, under the Regular Budget for CY 2007, intends to apply the cost of the project being undertaken by the Contractor to be awarded with the contract for the following:

Contract No.	Description	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Bid Security (5% of the ABC)	Contract Duration
1	Construction of Water Pipelines	P 1,000,000.00	P 50,000.00	3 months
2	Supply and Delivery of Water Meters	P 500,000.00	P 25,000.00	1 month
3	Rehabilitation of Water Tank	P 2,000,000.00	P 100,000.00	6 months

2. The Invitation shall include eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and the schedule of bidding activities.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

4. Bidders should have completed, within the period specified in the Philippine Bidding Documents (PBDs), a contract similar to the Project. The description of an activity for the Project being bid is stated in the PBDs.

5. Prospective bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours.

6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased from the BAC Secretariat for a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Davao City Water District, provided that bidders shall pay the applicable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 A.M. of December 15, 2007. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 18.

8. Bid opening shall be on December 15, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. at the Davao City Water District Conference Room. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend. Late bids shall not be accepted.

9. The Davao City Water District reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders, without assigning any reason for the action.

10. For further information, please refer to:

ENGR. ROMEO B. DELA CRUZ
Chairman, BAC Secretariat

METRO
Citizen's call
0918-8985566

Unfinished project

THE DEWALK rehabilitation project on Buendia Avenue Extension, particularly the stretch from Pasay-Makati bridge to Plaza Dilao in Paco, Manila, has been left unfinished for months now. Affected residents have been forced to cross some of the empty brick beds themselves since there are hall of water whenever it rains, making the sidewalks impassable. Why can take care of this problem?

FIRST JT, Paco, Manila

Steel posts for gaps

STEEL posts should be installed between the center islands at Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City to prevent it from passing through the gaps between the islands. These should be used only by pedestrians. Trikes that pass through the gaps can cause accidents, since they block passing vehicles.

RC, 42, Quezon City

Underpass traffic aides

TRAFFIC enforcers should always be around to assist pedestrians when crossing the underpass at Aurora Boulevard and Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City. Crossing the underpass here is always a risky business.

LEAH ARMIS, 18, Quezon City

Brighter colors

IT MIGHT be safer for the Pasig City police to wear bright or light-colored uniforms instead of dark blue as motorists can see them better at night and yellow or white uniforms during the rainy season.

DR. JORGEN SOMBONG, 48, Pasig City

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Republic of the Philippines
Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Supply and Delivery of Imported Watering Device kits
Plants and the Independent Power Producers
BAC-IB-1 - IB-177-2007

1. The National Power Corporation now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the above supply.
2. Interested to apply the sum as shown below being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), inclusive of Government sharing/revenue.

Item No.	Description	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Credit Conditions	Bidding Date, Time and Venue
P-1-07(1)	Supply and Delivery of Imported Watering Device Kits for Plants	P 10,000,000.00	Payment: 15 DAP Delivery: 30 DAP	December 17, 2007 10:00 A.M. Technical Room, 3rd Floor
P-1-07(2)	Supply and Delivery of Imported Watering Device Kits for Plants	P 10,000,000.00	Payment: 15 DAP Delivery: 30 DAP	December 17, 2007 10:00 A.M. Technical Room, 3rd Floor
P-1-07(3)	Supply and Delivery of Imported Watering Device Kits for Plants	P 10,000,000.00	Payment: 15 DAP Delivery: 30 DAP	December 17, 2007 10:00 A.M. Technical Room, 3rd Floor

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the IRR of RA 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.
4. Bidders should have completed, within the period specified in the PBDs, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an activity for the Project being bid is stated in the PBDs.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased from the BAC Secretariat for a non-refundable fee of P10,000.00 per item/ lot/ set (Item P-1-07(1), P-1-07(2), P-1-07(3)) upon payment of the corresponding amount to the Cashier's Office.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before the date and time specified in the immediate below or its extension/s/postponement/s.
7. Bidders are encouraged to submit Eligibility Documents and Bids in accordance with the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) Circular No. 3-2005. **Prospective bidders should register with PhilGEPS and secure the corresponding Certificate of Registration.**
8. Bids not meeting requirements must be returned to prospective bidders in the bidding. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the Ilocos Norte Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Head Office.
9. NPC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Bids, to annul the Bidding process at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders, but not limited to, grounds of fraud and corruption.
10. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Bids and Contracts Services Department (BCSD), NPC Building, Cebu, or telephone (032) 412-7000 local 1201, **www.napocor.gov.ph** (+) 1208 **(www.pcia.ru/ilocos/ilocos-sur-council-minutes)**.

Engr. JOSE CARLOS L. CASTAÑEDA
Vice President
Bids and Awards Committee

BAC Secretariat (2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Manila, Philippines

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of a BSP Employee Service System (ESS) and HRIS Module for Payroll.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the project is estimated at P[illegible].

BSP is an institution under development to provide a proper level of access to employees and management to a network of personnel, administrative and financial services information and other administrative data for easier analysis, archival, maintenance and other administrative purposes. The BSP envisions a system that is user-friendly, secure and compliant with e-commerce requirements.

The list of minimum eligibility requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Prospective contractors should not be rejected solely if any requirement is not submitted. Short-listing of eligible contractors will be done based on the following criteria:

1) The prospective contractor has experience and is in successfully operating technical support services for clients from 3 years to present. The following details should be provided:
   a) Name of the client;
   b) Contact person and address;
   c) Value (obligation) for the completed contract of the company and;
   d) Date of the contract (start date and completion date) and address; and
   e) Reference and software version implemented.
2) The prospective contractor shall submit a certificate of satisfactory performance for completed contracts from the client.
3) The prospective contractor shall submit a [illegible] on the Technical Capability of the firm that is to have the prospective contractor that should include the following information:
   a) Number of personnel, years of experience
   b) Educational background
   c) Technical training and
   d) Project engagements and area of involvement

In order to short-listed, the BSP intends to contract with a single entity. Bidders or the short-listed prospective contractors may form a joint venture, consortium or association to participate in the bidding process. Joint ventures shall submit and comply with the requirements of each individual participant.

The BAC shall draw up the short-list of prospective firms who have complied with the above requirements. Only the short-listed prospective bidders will be invited to submit bids. Bidders not included in the short-list will be informed accordingly.

The list of eligible documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat from [illegible] upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P[illegible] in the form of cash or manager's check. Bidders may also download the Eligibility Documents from the BSP website (www.bsp.gov.ph) and pay the fee not later than the submission of their bids.

Bid documents shall be available only to short-listed bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P[illegible] in the form of cash or manager's check.

The BAC shall conduct bids using the Single-Envelope System, consisting of a single envelope containing the preliminarily submitted bids, the subsequently submitted bids, and the bid security. The bidders shall submit their bids on [illegible] at the BSP Main Building, Manila. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding or failure, or not award the contract, and makes no guarantee that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

Engr. JOSE DE GUZMAN, JR.
Chairman

BAC Secretariat (2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY – ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. Nos. 840-2001 to 09 / Fax No. 840-2010

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY – ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (PNOC-EDC), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), hereby invites prospective contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following projects:

Project 1:
Location: Construction of Philippine Science High School Main Campus Multi-purpose Gymnasium Building I
Scope of Work: Construction of the Gymnasium Building
Source of Fund: Philippine Science High School Main Campus Special Trust Fund
Approved Budget for the Contract: Php 10,000,000.00

Project 2:
Location: Construction of Philippine Science High School Main Campus Dormitory Building
Scope of Work: Construction of the Dormitory Building
Source of Fund: Philippine Science High School Main Campus Special Trust Fund
Approved Budget for the Contract: Php 10,000,000.00

Project 3:
Location: Construction of Philippine Science High School Main Campus Engineering Building
Scope of Work: Construction of the Engineering Building
Source of Fund: Philippine Science High School Main Campus Special Trust Fund
Approved Budget for the Contract: Php 10,000,000.00

Prospective bidders should have completed a similar contract for the last 2 years with an amount of contract of 25% of the proposed project or more. Thoroughly understand the Philippine Bidding Documents (PBDs) as contained in Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is stated as follows. (Single stage bidding)

BAC Activities	Schedules
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	November 5-11, 2007
2. Pre-bid Conference	November 12, 2007 (10:00 A.M. Energy Center Conference Room)
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	November 13, 2007 (8:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.)
4. Opening of Bids	November 13, 2007 (10:00 A.M. Energy Center Conference Room)
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	November 14-18, 2007 from 8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
6. Pre-bid Conference	November 19, 2007 (10:00 A.M. Energy Center Conference Room)
7. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	November 20, 2007 (8:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.)
8. Opening of Bids	November 20, 2007 (10:00 A.M. Energy Center Conference Room)

The BAC will conduct its prequalification, bidding and evaluation of bids procedures using the "first-in, first-out" procedure. Bidders who have submitted their bids earlier than the scheduled time will be allowed to withdraw their bids and submit new bids, if they so desire, at any time before the deadline for the submission of bids. Bidders who arrive after the deadline for the submission of bids will not be allowed to submit their bids.

Bidders must submit their bids in a sealed envelope. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any informality or defect in any bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

Engr. [illegible]
Chairman, BAC

BAC Secretariat (2007)

DID YOU KNOW

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines College of Law building (Malcolm Hall) was named after George Arthur Malcolm, founder and first dean of the college.

Malcolm was born on Nov. 5, 1881, in Michigan, USA. After getting his law degree, he went to the Philippines and stayed here for 33 years. In 1911, he established the first English-language law school in the Philippines which eventually became the UP College of Law.

Malcolm was later appointed associate justice of the Philippine Supreme Court. He died in 1961 in California.

Cyril C. Bonalaya, Inquirer Research

STUDENTS get ready for an "out-of-this-world" show at the Planetarium.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Starry, starry day at the Planetarium

By Aileen W Lopez

THEY MAY NOT SEE A NIGHT sky filled with stars from their homes in the city, but an amazing simulation of one inside the Planetarium in Manila certainly made kids scream and happily bang in wonder and perhaps, in appreciation.

"Ang galing (It's great)!" said a girl from the Industrial Valley school in Mandaluyong as she and her classmates stared at the bright dots moving slowly on the ceiling.

"It's an exact copy of the real night sky," said Bel Palmeran, officer in charge of the Planetarium division. "Here in Metro Manila, the kids don't see a night sky like that because of pollution and bright lights. But with the Gore Projector, we can simulate the night sky and project the planets and other deep space objects like satellites."

The construction of a planetarium was conceived by former National Museum director Gen. Alfredo Alcuaz Sr. who proposed it to former First Lady Imelda Marcos in the early 1970s. The dome-shaped building with a 300-seating capacity on Padre Burgos Street, Ermita, a few meters away from Rizal Park, took nine months to build and was formally inaugurated on Dec. 8, 1972.

Still in operation

Today, the aging structure may seem like one of the city's abandoned buildings although the Planetarium is still very much operational.

Palmeran said they often draw elementary and high school students to their hour daily shows that take spectators on a trip out of the world.

Called "Journey to the Solar System, an interplanetary adventure," the show kicks off with a "sunset"—which is when the lights dim and the wonderful night sky is shown. It ends with "sunrise," when the lights brighten, complete with sunrise-evoking in the background.

While the star projector, a large machine in the theater's center, is the Planetarium's "heart," slide projectors complement the lecture by showing such features of the heavenly bodies, including Mercury's craters and Saturn's rings.

Aside from the major constellations that showed the house crowd's belt, the young audience was also astonished when little by little, the planets grew larger until they seemed within one's reach.

The lecture, added Palmeran, is updated with recent scientific advances such as Pluto being classified as a dwarf planet. Sometimes, however, the visual effects drown out the narrator's hypnotic voice.

According to Palmeran, they are currently developing synthesizer features on "The Ring Planets" which are composed of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Pluto.

"Our real purpose is to disseminate information and complement textbooks in schools, but we present it in a way that we show their real features and colors," said the senior museum researcher.

Palmeran, of the 32-year old structure, she revealed, was also long overdue and will begin before December. The first rehabilitation was done in 1995, after the inner dome that served as the screen collapsed due to old age and the effects of the earthquake the year before.

"We've due for a repair of the ceiling leakages and others, plus some repainting. More than that, we want to change the exhibits because ever since, those have not been updated," she said, adding that the Planetarium would remain open during the renovation which would take 180 days.

P4-M renovation

The rehabilitation would cost around P4 million, she said, excluding the updating of the exhibits.

Outside the theater, indeed, were exhibits on comets, meteorites and space explorations that featured yellowing photographs. Kids (and, feeling outdated, they hardly generated interest among the visitors).

Given the funds, Palmeran said they would create more interactive exhibits and monitors so the current ones with converting utilities. Photo displays would be part of Phase 1 while hands-on exhibits would form part of Phase 2.

But for schools and other interested visitors, students are

TURN TO A20

THE 11-YEAR-OLD Planetarium will soon undergo repairs and an overhaul of its outdated exhibits.

THERE are four one-hour shows from Tuesday to Saturday that feature the solar system and a show for kids on the "heavenly bodies" in the sky.

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Cop says Indian's abduction a case of mistaken identity

By Kristine L. Alave

AFTER BEING HELD CAPTIVE for an Indian national was freed on Saturday by his abductors after they realized that he was not the business man they were supposed to kidnap.

PNP General Jarvis identified the kidnap victim as Gurcharan Singh, 34, single and a businessman residing in Bhatinagar Sun Jolden, Tarnag Road.

Arvida said Singh went to the Taytay police station on Saturday afternoon to report his abduction and his release.

The police, however, have yet to identify the victim's captors.

Before Singh proceeded himself to the police, his relatives had reported his disappearance last week to authorities.

Police said Singh told them that he was abducted at around 12:30 a.m. on Oct. 28, while he was attending to his trending business in Bonta Street, Barangay Manrol.

According to Singh, the assailants forced him to get inside their car, a gray Toyota Revo with plate number EIG 811.

Following his investigation showed that the Revo plate had been stolen from a car owned by a pharmaceutical company, police said.

Arvida said Singh did not pay for his release because his captors let him go after realizing that he was not their target.

"It was a case of mistaken identity," the police officer said.

FOR THOSE unable to go to the Planetarium in Ermita, Manila, there is a mobile version which can accommodate at least 30 people per show.

Starry, starry day . . .

Finish page A19

weather to go to the Planetarium, a mobile version will soon be coming their way.

Palomaw said that although the mobile planetarium would only accommodate 30 people at a time, it may be a cheaper alternative to lining buses and paying the entrance fee.

Locations on outer space would also be held simultaneously with the actual Planetarium that has reached only as far as Manila.

Palomaw, however, hoped that even students from Pateros and Makabalo would soon experience the wonders of the universe, even through the smaller version of the Planetarium.

The Planetarium is open from Tuesday to Saturday with shows at 9 (9 a.m., 10:30, 11:30 a.m., 3:30, 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. admission fee is P50 for students and P70 for adults. Call 5277000 for more details.

MetroBriefs

Police brace for heavy traffic

ANTIPOLO: The heavy traffic in the next few days as Metro Manila residents return from the provinces, the Eastern Police District has ordered the deployment of additional policemen in major choke points and relevant commanders to avoid those "critical areas." EPD chief, Dir. Danilo Silva de la Cruz, said these "immediate concern" is the heavy volume of vehicles in the area's major thoroughfares starting last night. He identified the choke points as Ortigas Boulevard and Loyola intersection, Marcos Highway, and Ortigas Avenue. De la Cruz said the police are treating the traffic jams in these areas, which connect the heart of the metropolis to the eastern provinces. More policemen and patrols have been deployed in these areas to monitor traffic, he added. He also advised commuters to plan ahead of these thorough lines to avoid being stuck in traffic. De la Cruz advised the Philippine National Police's assurance that the All Saints' Day break was relatively peaceful as well as heavy incidents.

Ember L. Alave

Shooting victim tags killers

A dead SUV died the other day just hours after he was shot by three men in Quezon City. According to a police report, teenagers and three men pulled in San Miguel Extension, Payatas at 9:45a.m. on Saturday when they found Jonel Villaverde who got no farmingdeal Street. They saw a man lying on the ground, bleeding from several gunshot wounds. They also saw three men boarding a blue Toyota Tamaraw FX without license plates. The police report said. The victim was later identified as Oding Sampang, a Mandaluyong resident. In the City Jail Annex Medical Center he breathed but was pronounced dead at around midnight that same day. Before he died, however, he was able to tell police that he knows who his attackers were. They were identified as Bully Tan and Jayson Bagoondang, claiming did not say how the suspects were related and why they shot him.

Kenneth M. dela Cruz

Body found in Quiapo creek

QUIAPO: The clearing of the notorious "Little Vietnam" area in Quiapo, Manila, another body was found floating in the nearby creek Saturday night. SPO2 Benito Galanhar of the Manila Police District homicide division identified the victim as a male, found, around 30 to 35 years old, at a section of Estero de Quiapo, just outside of the Ma'asan tribe. Jonel's body was discovered at around 8:30 p.m. in the creek along Iargas Street, near the Manuel Luis Quezon University. Galanhar said the victim bore a wound on the head, indicating that he may have been hit with a blunt object before being thrown into the creek. Residents who were questioned could not give any information about Jonel's death, he added. An autopsy of the victim's body, however, would not be performed out of respect for Muslim traditions.

Alice W. Lane

In US war on terrorism, 'waterboarding' is not deemed torture

WASHINGTON—Eli Viarlaf, 31, the Sept. 11 attacks and despite the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, the United States leaders in the war on terrorists justifies extreme forms of interrogation, including "waterboarding," and is prepared to talk of torture.

During a Senate confirmation hearing earlier this month, attorney general nominee Michael Mukasey refused to call the legality of bringing a prisoner to near drowning to make him talk, drawing the fruit opposition Democrats and human rights groups.

"If he is still unsure whether the horrific practice of waterboarding is illegal, then he shouldn't be confirmed," said Human Rights Watch Executive Director Kenneth Roth.

"The only reason to equivocate on waterboarding is to protect administration officials who orchestrated it from possible prosecution," he added.

In the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, the United States launched a clandestine and interrogation drive that allowed intelligent agents to employ tougher techniques on suspected terrorists that were kept strictly confidential.

The New York Times in early October published justice department documents that said it was not illegal to attach electrodes around, expose them to extreme temperatures or to simulate drowning, a technique used during Algeria's war of independence in the 1950s.

The Geneva Conventions expressly outlaw any form of mental and physical torture to restrain information from prisoners of war and mandates that all combatants in detention "shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, including prohibition of outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment."

"This government does not torture people, but acts in US law and our international obligations," Bush has said, defending his war on terror. "The procedures used in this program are safe, they are lawful and they are necessary," he added on Thursday. AFP

US eyes closing Guantanamo

WASHINGTON—Bush administration officials are considering granting Guantanamo detainees substantially greater rights as part of an effort to close the detention center and possibly move much of its population to the United States, according to officials involved in the discussions.

One proposal that is being widely discussed in the administration would overhaul the procedures for determining whether detainees are properly held by granting them expanded access to classified hearings and by giving federal judges, not military officers, the power to decide whether suspects should be held.

Some officials now say that moving the detainees to the US soil would require giving them enhanced protections.

The Bush administration has balked for more than five years at a central legal pillar of the war on terror: what the officials alone has the power to decide which foreign terrorism suspects should be held and for how long, and locking away them that would be a sharp change of course.

"If some officials are that embarking detainees' rights would also help the administration on legality by undermining a case brought by suspects at Guantanamo that is now before the Supreme Court, which could wind up wresting them even more power to challenge their detention.

Under current procedures at Guantanamo, military officers decide whether detainees are properly held as enemy combatants, and the suspects are not permitted lawyers in this down-to hearings.

Officials from President Bush on down have said they would like to close Guantanamo. In interviews, officials said the discussions of detainees' rights was not an acknowledgment that past policies were flawed, but rather was an indication that the administration was engaged in trying to assess the legal and practical consequences of diverting the detention center and moving detainees to the United States. AFP

World summit delegates vow to fight for better toilets

NEW DELHI—Delegates from dozens of nations said they needed to work harder to make toilets available to the developing world and shift away from "disgusting cultural" systems like the ones in Bush and sewers.

The world needs to build almost 180,000 toilets a day to halve the number of people without basic sanitation by 2015, according to experts at the gathering.

But Jacks Sims, of summit co-organizer the World Toilet Organization, said at the close of the meeting that it could be done.

"Should think Singapore is an clean," said Sim, juxtaposing a picture of himself defecating in the streets as a child there 40 analogue with a photo this year of a boy in India's rich-hub Bangalore doing the same.

"It was not always like that." Sim delegates acknowledged during the conference last week that many countries still have a long way to go.

Some 2.6 billion people—more than 40 percent of the globe's population—still do not have access to hygienic toilets that do not pollute sources or soil. More than half of them live in India and China.

The United Nations wants to halve that number in the next eight years as part of its Millennium Development Goals.

Delegates pledged in a joint declaration Friday to "facilitate a paradigm shift from disposal oriented to reuse and recycling sanitation systems."

"It has been noted that there is a need to accelerate the progress on advancing the Millennium Development Goal on sanitation by 2015," the statement said.

Some 400 delegates from more than 40 countries promised to "mobilize governments, UN agencies, financial institutions, corporate bodies, associations, service providers, local leaders and other stakeholders."

A Swedish delegate said that the cost to achieve the 2015 goal could be achieved for $2.5 billion a year.

Many home-farmers ruined by poor sanitation still endure roundtrade annually, including as many as 1.6 million children from diarrhea alone. AFP

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Battle rages over planned London mega-mosque

LONDON—DISPUTES OVER mosques have broken out across Europe, Residents from Belgium to France to Germany have expressed unease at minarets competing in the urban landscape with the spires and steeples of centuries-old cathedrals.

But the fight raging over an abandoned lot in London's East End is of an altogether grander scale. A large and assertive Islamic core proposed building what would have been the largest mosque in Europe, smack at the gateway to the 2012 Olympic Games, and within sight of London's financial district.

That plan was sent back to the drawing board to be scaled down, but not before raising a furor of equal size and discomforting questions about the right of Islamic Muslims to take up a public space commensurate with their growing numbers.

This summer on the website of Prime Minister Gordon Brown, more than 250,000 critics of the proposed mosque registered a petition initiated by a backer of the conservative British National Party. Some of them said a large mosque had no right to exist in such a prominent place in a Christian country.

When, around the same time, the historian of religious Karen Armstrong wrote an article in the liberal Guardian newspaper, commenting favorably about the mosque, the paper's website was deluged with complaints.

In Newham, the borough where the mosque would stand, Alan Craig, the leader of the Christian Peoples Alliance Party in the East End, started a one-man campaign against the mosque's developer that has mushroomed and gained national prominence.

He began by emphasizing the size of the mosque. But soon he focuses on its sponsor, Tablighi Jamaat, a worldwide evangelical Islamic group based in Pakistan with millions of followers that professes to encourage Muslims to be more devout in their faith.

The driving force behind the plan to build a grander mosque has been Abdul Khaliq Khan, 55, a British businessman born in Pakistan and a longtime follower of Tablighi Jamaat.

On the No. 10 Downing St. website, the prime minister's office notes that no planning application has been made, and makes clear that the government has taken no position.

A London public relations firm, Indigo, which has put up a website on the mosque, abbeyhalfmosque.com, has been hired by the secretive Tablighi Jamaat to deflect pressure on it to speak for itself. AYT

A CHOPPER MOMENT of an emergency rescue helicopter evacuates flood victims in Villahermosa, Mexico, on Nov. 3. —

Hungry Mexico flood victims turn to looting

VILLAHERMOSA, MEXICO—RESCUE workers and police were out in force helping flood victims in southern Mexico, as food shortages sent hundreds of hungry people on a looting rampage at a shopping center.

Around 80 percent of the Belgium-sized state of Tabasco was flooded after seven rain-bloated rivers burst their banks in the flat, flood-prone region, in its worst natural disaster in decades.

In neighboring Chiapas state, bordering the Pacific Ocean, authorities put 20 townships with more than a million people under a state of alert Saturday after 16 rivers overflowed their banks, and reported one person killed by the floods.

In Tabasco, the floods affected more than half the state's 2.1 million population, and one death has been confirmed so far. Patrols were still searching for victims Saturday.

Many thousands of people were trapped at home, but some in desperate circumstances, many have desperately tried to flee, making as long as three days for a normal bus pickup from their rooftops or as they clung to tree branches.

Thousands poured into neighboring states Chiapas and Veracruz seeking refuge.

But many others holed up despite the flooding, refusing to leave out their ransacked homes, fearing looters would take all their possessions.

Carlos Mario Patron, 70, had been door to door in his home, and said he was happy that "the water is down a bit. But at the rate it is going to take a week or two to go down to normal."

Drinking water and food shortages brought on by flooded roads in Tabasco have prompted several looting incidents at abandoned homes and businesses.

The most insistent took place Saturday morning when around 1,000 people overran a downtown shopping center in Tabasco, overwhelming law enforcement officials gunned in the area, and making off with everything in sight, including televisions and home appliances.

"People are going hungry, we're aware of that," Tabasco Gov. Andres Granier said on television after the looting incident, "but being hungry doesn't justify such behavior and overnight attacks."

Smaller looting incidents occurred Friday and police made several arrests, the governor also said. AFP

Artery disease rises among US women

ORLANDO, FLA.—MORE US WOMEN ARE developing a type of artery disease that raises the risk of death from heart disease and stroke, researchers said on Sunday.

Researchers used US government health surveys to track rates of peripheral artery disease, known as PAD, in people age 40 and over with no outward symptoms of cardiovascular illness.

PAD is a circulatory condition in which narrowed arteries cut blood flow to the limbs.

Rates among women rose from 4.1 percent in a nationally representative 1999-2000 survey to 6.3 percent in a 2003-2004 survey. Among men, the rate fell from 3.3 percent to 2.8 percent during the same period, the researchers said.

"In those women with PAD, the increasing prevalence was associated with an increase in the prevalence of obesity," Dr. Andrew Sumner, medical director of the Heart Station and Cardiac Prevention at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown, Pennsylvania, who led the study, said in an interview.

"It's a huge number of people who are at risk and don't know it," Sumner added.

PAD develops when fatty deposits accumulate in the inner linings of artery walls, cutting blood flow and oxygen to the legs, feet, arms and other parts of the body. It raises the risk of developing and dying from heart disease and stroke. Reuters

Once more, the Inquirer has received the most accolades in the Print category of the coveted, highly prestigious Catholic Mass Media Awards.

In a near sweep of all its nominations, 8 major awards were given to our very own: Fernando del Mundo, Will Conniman and Alvyn Papa (Best Investigative Report for "The State of Philippine Education"); Leila Salaverria and Nestor P. Burgos, Jr. (Best News Coverage for "Oil spill off Guimaras could reach Boracay"); Edwin Bacaoanas (Best News Photograph for "Father and Child"); Jess Abiera (Best Editorial Cartoon for "Rights of the Child"); Michael Tan (Best Opinion Column for "Pinoy Kasi"); Nestor Torre (Best Entertainment Column for "Viewfinder"); Gemma Luz Constan (special citation for her special report on "Filipinos sex prisoner thought she was in France"); and again, Leila Salaverria (special citation for her special report on the "Guimaras oil spill").

Inquirer is honored to have them, and many other multi-awarded journalists, publish excellent news, information and opinion that touch Filipinos' lives every day. Truly, they are what make being Number One a source of pride.

Fernando del Mundo

Will Conniman

Alvyn Papa

Leila Salaverria

Nestor Burgos Jr.

Edwin Bacaoanas

Jess Abiera

Michael Tan

Nestor Torre

Gemma Luz Constan

Japan seen heading for political chaos

TOKYO—A FAILED ATTEMPT BY JAPAN'S prime minister to form a grand coalition with the main opposition party and "deadlock" in parliament has cast the country on track for more political confusion and policy gridlock, analysts say.

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda sounded out Democratic Party leader Ichiro Ozawa about forming a new ruling coalition in a meeting on Friday, but the opposition swiftly rejected the offer.

"The meeting has made things more fluid, anything can happen. We are entering a period of tremendous political upheaval," said Sophia University political science professor Koichi Nakano.

"We are basically back to gridlock, with us even greater degree of political uncertainty."

Fukuda said on Friday that he had suggested a new political framework to Ozawa to resolve the policy stalemate created when the ruling camp lost a July upper house election, allowing the opposition to delay key legislation.

Topping the list of bills Fukuda wants to enact is one to enable Japan's Navy to resume a refueling mission in support of U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan, activities those ally Washington says are vital to its fight against terrorism.

Tokyo withdrew its ships on Thursday when a law enabling the mission expired. Ozawa has said the mission lacked a UN mandate and violated Japan's pacifist constitution, and the Democrats and their allies have vowed to vote against the new bill.

Japan's refueling operations for US and allied ships patrolling the Indian Ocean are required to be halted for months if no longer—something Fukuda must explain to US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates when he visits Tokyo this week and to President George W. Bush in talks in Washington the week after.

Fukuda's ruling bloc could now decide to use its two-thirds majority in the Lower House to override an Upper House rejection of the bill more than the Democrats rejected his offer.

So far, lawmakers in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior coalition partner have been wary of taking that step for fear it would anger voters, who are divided over the mission.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura, however, on Sunday stopped short of making that threat. "That is still a matter for the future," Machimura told public broadcaster NHK.

Machimura also denied the possibility of a snap poll for the powerful Lower House, speculation about which has been swirling ever since the ruling bloc lost its upper house majority.

"Dissolving parliament is not something we are thinking about even in the furthest reaches of our minds," he told NHK.

No election for the powerful Lower House need be held until late 2009, but pundits have been predicting an early poll, most likely next April but perhaps even as early as January.

The current session of parliament, set to end on Nov. 10, is now likely to be extended for about one month, media reported.

Fukuda's ownership of the Democrats could well be seen as a sign of weakness by the prime minister, whose one-month old government has failed to enact a single bill, analysts said.

But media reports on Sunday that it was Ozawa who made the offer first, without consulting Democratic Party executives, mean his credibility could be damaged even more.

Ozawa has made creating a viable alternative to the long-ruling LDP a top goal ever since he bolted the party in 1993, and many had thought the Democrats had their best chance ever of taking power in the next election.

"Both sides are blaming the other for taking the initiative and that muddying the water," Nakano said. Reuters

Opposition leader announces resignation

OZAWA

TOKYO—THE HEAD OF JAPAN'S main opposition party said Sunday he would step down as party chief amid controversy over his apparent willingness to form a coalition with the ruling bloc.

The resignation of Democratic Party President Ichiro Ozawa came just days after his party blocked government efforts to extend a naval mission in support of US-led operations in Afghanistan.

Ozawa said he was resigning to take responsibility for causing confusion within the party for failing to immediately reject a power-sharing proposal from Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on Friday.

"I sensed political confusion over Prime Minister Fukuda's condition proposal," Ozawa told a news conference.

"I have therefore decided to resign from my post as president," he said.

Ozawa discussed the possible alliance with the LDP—executive committee, which voted to reject the proposal later Friday. Fukuda told reporters he was trying to break a deadlock in the Diet, Japan's parliament, between the two parties.

Some DPJ leaders later criticized Ozawa, saying the party should defeat the ruling Liberal Democratic Party at the ballot—and thus an alliance was out of the question.

"I took this committee's decision as a vote of no-confidence," Ozawa said. He was expected to remain his parliamentary seat.

Earlier Sunday, another MS executive demanded early elections to decide the parliamentary impasse.

The DPJ will not back a compromise that would allow Japanese naval ships to return to the Indian Ocean to support coalition operations in Afghanistan, party Secretary General Naoto Kan said.

"Our aim is to achieve a change in government," Kan told a talk show on public broadcaster NHK. "What we need now is to ask the public for a mandate in the lower house." AP

DISPLACED, WEARY AND HUNGRY

Displaced Somalis sit in a camp destroyed by fire near Mogadishu on Nov. 3. Almost 80,000 Somalis have fled the coastal city during heavy fighting in Mogadishu since the last weekend, adding to hundreds of thousands who ran away earlier this year, according to the United Nations' refugee agency. AL/AP

Relative of Brazilian shot by UK police says killers deserve prison

JEAN CHARLES DE MENEZES

GONZAGA, BRAZIL—A CLOSE relative of a Brazilian killed by London police reborn he was mistaken for a terrorist said on Sunday prison sentences would bring a measure of justice to the shooting.

The aunt of Jean Charles de Menezes said she was dishonored, cried by Thursday's decision that found the London police guilty of endangering the public by mistakenly shooting the 27-year-old Brazilian electrician and penalized the force with fines. No individual officer was charged in the shooting.

"I think one justice would be for them to go to prison, at least for some time so that they could think about what they did," Maria Bruneira Figueiredo told The Associated Press on Friday at her home in Gonzaga, a remote town of 8,000 in southeastern Brazil.

De Menezes' parents declined to comment on the case unless they were paid.

De Menezes was killed during a frantic manhunt for four failed suicide bombers in a British capital already on edge after four suicide bombers killed 52 commuters two weeks earlier. On July 22, 2005, officers trailed the Brazilian migrant using a subway train and, believing he was a bomber, shot him seven times at close range in front of screaming commuters.

A British judge found the London police force 175,000 pounds (US$355,000) and ordered it to pay costs of 385,000 pounds (US$781,000). But the Metropolitan Police said the killing was an error, not a crime.

London police chief Ian Blair expressed "deep regret" over De Menezes' death but said he has no intention of resigning, and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he had "full confidence" in the police chief.

De Menezes moved abroad, like many Brazilians, to earn money and help provide a better life for his family at home.

Jurandi archanchas thought De Menezes might have been a suspect when dropped his gym membership card at the scene of one of the failed attacks.

Armed officers shot De Menezes five times in the head, once in the neck and once in the shoulder. A police lawyer told the jury that De Menezes was shot because he reacted as police had been forbidden a suicide bomber might react. AP

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The procurement must take into account all related implementation activities and processes such as relocation of mainframe, data migration, remote data mirroring, maintenance support, technology skills transfer and documentation, and project management.

The bidders must submit a Letter of Intent by hand and may secure the Eligibility Requirements and Terms of Reference (TOR), **upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Twelve Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (PhP12,500.00) and upon signing a Confidentiality Agreement** from **November 5 to 9, 2007** during regular office hours (between 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM) from:

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Information Technology - Bids and Awards Committee (IT-BAC)
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Telephone No. (02) 7-405-7133
Fax Number (02) 7-526-2676
Contact Person: Cecilia C. Sacro
AVP, Network Operations Department
Secretariat, IT-BAC
Email Address: ithac@landbank.com

The Pre-bid Conference shall be held on **23 November 2007 (Tuesday)**, 10:00 AM at the abovementioned address.

Submission and opening of bid shall be on **28 November 2007 (Tuesday)**. The sealed competing bidder shall be declared the winner.

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(Sgd.) **JOSE C. NOVALES III**
Senior Vice President
Head, IT-BAC

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

UN seeks to restart talks with Burma

RANGOON—UNITED NATIONS ENVOY IBRAHIM GAMbari met a senior junta official in isolated capital Naypyidaw in Burma (Myanmar) on Sunday, as the military government defended its move to expel a top UN diplomat.

A government official, who wished to remain anonymous, said that Gambari held talks with Aung Kyi, the liaison minister who the regime has tasked with building relations with democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

It is not yet clear if the Nigerian diplomat will meet with pro-junta hardliner Thein Sein, but the official said Gambari would meet Tuesday with Aung San Suu Kyi, currently under house arrest in Rangoon, and members of her National League for Democracy party.

Gambari is on the second day of his visit here to press for political reform and dialogue with the opposition following a crackdown in September that killed at least 13 protestors and saw thousands of people locked up.

But the junta's announcement late Friday that it would not restore the accreditation of Charles Petrie, the UN's most senior official in Burma, has threatened to overshadow the original purpose of Gambari's mission.

Burma's state-run New Light of Myanmar newspaper on Sunday carried a commentary accusing the United Nations country team of misrepresenting the humanitarian and economic situation here in a report on Oct. 24.

It claimed the assessment was "not based on firm evidence or true data and that it does not reflect the objective conditions of Burma."

The October statement, released in coincide with United Nations Day, said the protests which broke out in August in response to a rise in fuel prices highlighted daily hardships in impoverished Burma.

"The events clearly demonstrated the everyday struggle to meet basic needs, and the urgent necessity to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country," it said.

In a letter obtained by AFP from Burma's foreign ministry to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's office, the junta accused Petrie of "acting beyond his capacity by issuing the statement which not only harms Burma's reputation but also the reputation of the United Nations."

The possible expulsion of Petrie has provoked criticism from both Singapore, current chair of regional bloc Asean, and the United States, which called the junta's move an "insult to the United Nations."

A UN statement Saturday said that Gambari was briefed by Petrie upon his arrival in Burma, and passed on the Secretary-General's support for the United Nations mission there and Petrie himself. AFP

A BUDDHIST monk at one of the many shrines at the Shwedagon pagoda in Rangoon.

UN in Burma: A history of failed efforts

BANGKOK, THAILAND—EFFORTS IN RECENT years by the United Nations to achieve reconciliation between the ruling military and pro-democracy leaders in Burma (also known as Myanmar) have been frustrated by frustration, false hopes and failure:

1989: Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi detained and put under house arrest after the military's brutal suppression of pro-democracy marches.

1990: Peruvian diplomat Alvaro de Soto named special UN envoy to break deadlock between military and democracy advocates. UN and World Bank prepare financial incentives for change that then Foreign Minister Win Aung calls "offering a banana to a monkey and asking it to dance."

1990: UN Commission on Human Rights names Sadako Ogata to assess the human rights situation in Burma. She is followed by Yozo Yokota and then-current post holder, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro.

April 4, 2000: Malaysian diplomat Razali Ismail appointed special UN envoy to Burma. He later acknowledges a company he chairs does business with the Burma regime.

Sept. 2000: Suu Kyi, released in 1995, placed under house arrest again.

Nov. 29, 2000: Razali say he's "hopeful that some significant progress could be made in the near future."

2002: Razali helps secure the release of Suu Kyi from house arrest and the regime declares "the era of confrontation is over."

2003: Suu Kyi is put back under house arrest.

Jan. 6, 2006: Razali resigns in envoy, frustrated at being barred from entering the country for nearly two years.

May 26, 2006: Nigerian diplomat Ibrahim Gambari becomes the first foreign envoy to meet Suu Kyi in more than two years amid hints of a "breakthrough."

May 22, 2007: Gambari appointed special UN envoy. Suu Kyi's house arrest extended another year.

Sept. 2007: Protests over a surge in consumer goods prices brings thousands to the streets. The military is deployed to crush the demonstrations. At least 31 are killed and thousands detained.

Sept. 26: Gambari arrives for four-day visit to Burma, meeting junta leaders and Suu Kyi. The regime later holds a brief meeting with Suu Kyi.

Oct. 11: UN Security Council, in its first formal statement on the crisis, says it "strongly deplores" situation in country.

Nov. 2: Junta says it intends to expel top UN diplomat in the country.

Nov. 3: Gambari arrives in Burma in another effort at reconciliation. AP

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DJANGO Bustamante shows winning form against Yuk Zikyeat.

Django, 3 more RP cue artists advance

By Hsiang S. Casilo

FRANCISCO "DJANGO" BUSTAMANTE WENT THROUGH HIS stint in the "Group of Death" in a virtual waltz. But Antonio Lining stared death in the eye and blinked.

Bustamante dismantled two foes in successive pounding sets more merciless than a TKO dismissing of Taiwan Jeong Wang-hsin as he clinched a spot to win in the $400,000 World Pool Championship at the Araneta Coliseum.

Former champion also Pagdayon followed suit—also to the same easy manner—and things looked perfect for the Philippine contingent until Lining fell by the wayside opposite a patient Corey Deuel of the US.

Lining, after losing his opening match to Jeong, 6-0, and rebounding to play a third match, fidgeted two unsuccessful shots on four outs open to blow a 7-1 lead against the young Americo and become the first Filipino to hit the shootout with a 7-9 loss.

But it wasn't as if he didn't get another shot.

After Deuel won four straight racks to knot the score at 7, the veteran Lining had a golden chance to take the lift and break for the clincher as Deuel muffed an easy shot on the yellow 1 after his break.

But it looked like moves did the Filipino in as Lining bungled an easy attempt on No. 3 to the right corner pocket that left Deuel a wide open table.

The Philippines advanced all its Day 1 bets into the first round on Saturday with defending champion Ronnie Alcano scoring 13on "Easy" Boyet, Joven Bustamante and Antonio Gabica.

DJANGO, 9/9

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La Salle eyes repeat in Intercollegiate tilt

LA SALLE TIES A REPEAT OF its mighty first leg sweep when the newly revived National Intercollegiate Golf 2001 tourney today at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club in Lipa, Batangas.

La Salle's main crew of Charlie Hong, Mario Oliver, Justin Lingap, Mico Ilac and Jorge Pace are going for another sweep of the team and individual titles but should expect a tougher challenge against the six other teams in the field.

In the first leg played at Splendido Taal Golf and Country Club, La Salle posted a 22-stroke win to tease play with Hong and Lingap finishing 1-2 in the individual count.

The Philippine Golf Foundation is the main backer of the Intercollegiate team in cooperation with Malayan and the other host venues. Subang Travels is the official transport company and Lyon/Golfers Network Inc., the equipment and apparel sponsor.

Due to challenge the La Salle bid are teams from Ateneo, College of St. Benilde, University of the Philippines, University of the East, University of Santo Tomas and University of Asia and the Pacific.

UST sparkhead Ivanov Antero will try to redeem himself from a lackluster showing in the first leg while Ateneo is throwing up its full force to shoot for the top plums in the second of five 36-hole events around exclusive clubs in Luzon.

Teams are allowed to register players who must be below 24 years of age.

2/24 Shining (left) lands a punch to the forehead during Tañamor during their final bout in the 48-kilogram Class of the World Boxing Championships in Chicago, Saturday.

Tañamor bows to Zou, settles for silver medal

By Dennis U. Sosa, Inquirer Libre

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS—LIGHT FLYWEIGHT BOXER TAÑAMOR SUCCUMBED TO THE all-around show of Zou Shiming of China, who easily won their gold medal rematch, 30-3, Saturday in the International Amateur Boxing Association World Championships at the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion here.

Tañamor lost his left hand while parrying Shiming's 1-2 combinations early in the bout and settled for the silver medal, matching the effort by new national women's boxing coach Roel Velasco in the biennial event.

Velasco, who also bagged a bronze in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, paralleled his way to the silver medal during the 1997 worlds in Budapest, Hungary.

"My hand hurts whenever I throw punches. I also failed to defend solidly because of that," Tañamor said in Filipino "But I'm not going to make excuses. Shiming won."

Knowing that Shiming, China's first Olympic medalist, now way ahead, Tañamor, the lone saving grace for the BOXFAN Smart boxing team, waged an all-out attack.

But the Chinese dynamo proved elusive while repeatedly scoring with stinging jabs on the run which prevented Tañamor from making any headway.

"I tried to counter him, but he proved an elusive target," said Tañamor, who could meet Shiming anew in next year's Beijing Olympics, where the Filipino lad earlier qualified after reaching the quarterfinals here.

Shiming opened a 6-3 lead after two minutes of action, padded this to 10-1 before a Tañamor left straight made it 10-4.

Despite the close win, some experts criticized the scoring. TV replays showed that Tañamor should have scored the first point with a thunderous left straight to Shiming's face, but the judges did not respond. Shiming went ahead, 6-1, at the end of the first round and made it 7-1 despite punching with an open glove early in the second round.

"I'm amazed but not surprised. The scoring was simply unbelievable," said Dennis Ruppert, an American boxing promoter, who is also the manager of reigning WBC bantamweight titlist Oleg Maskaev of Russia.

Dickie Wood, an American trainer in the audience, also expressed his frustration over the scoring. "The Filipino boxer should have been credited with points. I think the judges were very biased."

"He showed to the world that Filipino boxers, whether professionals and amateurs, are world-class. Harry Tañamor was well and earned the respect of all," said Filipino community leader Rolando Yao, a former member and manager of the national cycling team. Ricardo Fornalera, an Asian Games boxing gold medalist, said he expects big things in Sagrado for Tañamor in the Beijing Olympics.

Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Jimmy F. Lopez said the silver medal is a worthy finish for the BOXFAN Smart boxing team.

"We lost our first three bouts here but bounced back mightily. Walter [Ebeler] and Urasheer [Thunder] came to within a whisker of gaining slots in the Olympics. We learned our lessons here."

Lopez said that the Philippines is looking forward to competing in the next Asian Olympic qualifying slated January in Bangkok, Thailand.

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Baguio marathon: Lindawan stuns Vence

BAGUIO CITY—ARI UNAIMEmining runner extended his target and hosted former Olympian and top favorite Bay Sinco in the first elimination race of the 31st National Milo Marathon yesterday at the Burnham track here.

Arry Lindawan, who was just aiming for a top three finish in the 21-kilometer qualifying race, clocked one hour, 13 minutes and 23 seconds in claiming his first ever bicycle in the annual fun run.

Before the start of the race, all eyes were on 1996 Olympian and six-time Milo Marathon national champion Sinco.

The 41-year-old Vence grabbed the early lead but Lindawan caught up with him in the last five kilometers.

Sinco, the country's 42K marathon bet in the December Southeast Asian Games in Thailand along with Milo Marathon runner Isidro Udiando Buenavista, wound up second with a time of 1:13:06.

"Hindi nga ako makapaniwala na nanalo ako [I can't believe I won]," said the 23 year-old Lindawan from Sison, Pangasi. "Gusto ko lang na mag- [I just wanted to] qualify sa Olympics [Finals]."

Placing third was Mateo Pedro at 1:17:05.

The dreadful mile was ruled by Florabelina Bonoto (1:36:59) who claimed her first Milo championship.

Catherine Segida and Junior Madrigano finished second and third, respectively, with clockings of 1:38:20 and 1:38:40.

"Wala akong idea [I've didn't expect] si Lindawan ang mauuna when the latter overtook him.

"My focus is on the SEA Games," said Sinco.

Sinco has already won one gold, two silvers and one bronze medals in previous SEA Games editions and is aiming for another medal in December.

The top three finishers in the men's and women's 21K race advanced to the 42K grand finale set tomorrow at the Burnham track and Buenavista, Isidro Sinco Manila leg winners, won't join because of their SEA Games training.

The 5K fun run was ruled by Eileen Hernandez, Conner Gutierrez and Lara Mark Mendoza in the men's and Mary Ann Sparta, Jana Galvez and Brenda Bicogno in the distaff side. The winners in the 1K race for kids were Paul Swigers II and Ara Mae Serano (6-0) and Jeoffrey Oponda and Carlos Gaoiran (10-12).

THE TOP three finishers in the Baguio City leg of the 31st Milo Marathon pose for a photo opportunity with Vence, champion Jerry Lindawan and third placer Alonzo Pudas. They are joined at the podium by Nestle's Philip Suarez, Pat Gee Ong, MVP Milo Sports Events, Nestle regional sales director Patrick Diaz and local race organizer Tessaro del Mesa.

Django, 3 more ...

From page A23

Bustamante, the 43-year-old known as the heartbreak kid of this event, first scored a 9-6 win over South African Zeyneb Van Schoor overcoming early in the afternoon to win the first seven racks against the Korean on the way to the afternoon.

"I was trying to feel the table in my first match," Bustamante, the 2001 runner-up to Ireland Strickland, said to Filipino. "I got a total feel of it (in my second match) and everything just went my way I guess.

"But there's still a long way to go and anything can still happen."

Oliver Ortmann of Germany also came out of the "Group of Death" making, marching on after victories over Hans Tian Ngee of Germany, 9-1, and Dowd, 9-6.

"Some shoot fine," Dowd, possibly the brightest American hope in the event, said ruefully when interrogated that he was the first European to claim a Filipino scalp. "But it was a great match."

Rustil Gallego also made it to the knockout phase, going unscathed and clinching his spot with a 9-3 thrashing of Jimmy T'sop used Chiang Jung Jiun of Taipei.

Gallego earlier tipped Singapore's Chan Bieng Kiaring, 9-6.

Lee Vann Corteza then made it 4-of-5 for the day, storing a come-from-behind 9-8 decision of Taiwanese Chang Fu-sui and a similar 9-4 race of Jeremy Jones of the United States to become the second Group 6 qualifier after Mika Immonen of Finland.

That group had every man in share of controversy after Immonen almost got into a fight with Jones, whom he beat, 9-6, in match one, both engaged in a series of trash-talking that almost ignited a flashfight.

Three more Filipinos see action today with Marlon Manalo opening his Group 1 drive opposite both Dejan Jurkovic and Leonardo Secchi, squaring off with last year's runners-up Ralf Souquet of Germany. Alf De Luna also gets going against Jasdeep Tor of Serbia.

The last two of the 11 Filipinos entered—Dennis Orcollo and Ruben Gotesco—don't play until tomorrow.

Indonesian Muhammad Zulfikri and Dean Philip Imperio were the others to qualify from Pagulayan's group, with Zulfikri sealing his slot after a 9-1 win over David Alcaide of Spain. Imperio topped Siberian Kreuger of Australia their rubber match, 9-1.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Marquez fails to impress Pacquiao

IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE TITLE DEfenses for World Boxing Council (WBC) super featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez yesterday but it maybe not impressive enough for the macho wanted to impress most.

Filipino champion Manny Pacquiao told Bombo Radyo/Philboxing.com in a telephone interview that Marquez was "slow and had no real power" minutes after the Mexican retained his crown with a unanimous decision win over Rocky Juarez in Tucson, Arizona.

Marquez, defending for title for the first time after dethroning fellow Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera early in the year, connected his usual jab to route to a 118-110, 117-111, 120-108 victory.

"Kung kay Gerry (Penalosa) ito rin naman yun," Pacquiao stressed as he rendered confirmation of a victory in a possible rematch with Marquez.

Pacquiao, who was interviewed by Nathaniel in from his home in General Santos City where he watched the fight, also noted that Marquez failed to finish off the smaller Juarez inside the distance despite connecting with solid shots in the latter's stomach.

As expected, Marquez wanted no time in challenging Pacquiao, who only last month outclassed Barrera in their rematch.

"I had great preparation for this fight," Marquez told the media after the fight. "I have worked very hard for four months, and now I want Manny Pacquiao. See he doesn't want to fight me."

The WBC had earlier ruled that Marquez should earn Juarez in a mandatory showdown should he get past Juarez.

Pacquiao and Marquez fought to a draw in their first fight in 2004 after the Mexican survived three knockdowns in the first round.

The Filipino ring icon said he expects fight again early next year with his handlers now looking at several prospects.

Pacquiao, who many consider as the world's best fighter, has been called out left and right by different fighters lately, ranging from featherweights, super featherweights and even the lightweights.

Even former Olympic gold medalist and world champion Joel Casamayor has called out Pacquiao, while some camps have expressed interest in a possible Oscar De La Hoya-Pacquiao showdown. With a report from Sidney Lagundaay

JUAN Manuel Marquez (left) slips a jab past Rocky Juarez in the second round of their WBC super featherweight title bout in Tucson, Arizona.

Manuel rips Rocky, wants Pacman

TUCSON, ARIZONA—JUAN MANUEL Marquez defended his World Boxing Council super featherweight title with a 12-round decision over Rocky Juarez at the Desert Diamond Casino here on Saturday.

Marquez, who suffered a hand injury in winning only his 6th in postponement, won on all three judges scorecards, 118-110, 117-111, 120-108.

Marquez (38-3-1 30 KOs) is hoping his victory leads to a rematch with Filipino fistball Manny Pacquiao.

Juarez (27-4, 19 KOs) suffered a cut over his left eye in the first round and couldn't stop the bleeding for the entire fight. Juarez won the silver medal in the 2000 Summer Olympics.

"I had great preparation for this fight," Marquez said. "I have worked very hard for four months, and now I want Manny Pacquiao, but he doesn't seem to fight me."

The 33-year-old Knockout Juarez suffered his third loss in four fights.

"This is the first fight that I got cut and had blurred vision because of it," Juarez said. "I know from the second when we bumped heads that it was going to be bad.

"Never at one point did I want to stop the fight. The cut did affect me though, because it

Boxing wake-up call in Chicago

IT'S EASY TO SAY NICE things about boxer Cherry Tabanico, who dared break away from a sleepy losing system to make it to his third Olympics.

He boasted skotted, damned when he died his red head gear after a dominant stand against his younger Thai rival in the semifinals of the World Championship that earned him a slot in next year's Beijing Olympics.

The venerable pride of Zamboanga boldly announced he had represented the Philippines in both the 2000 Sydney and 2004 Athens Olympics.

But the best he has scored, as the lone qualifier from the 7-man ISF squad, was another solid shot at the elusive Olympic medal, nothing more.

* * *

So how did he do it?

Tabanico based he had to box differently, unlike most of his teammates.

"May mga timago, tabla, sumuntok, dedepin, kinali para sagot ti sand new moves, run, punch, retreat, counter, upercuts, attack," Tabanico based after his clinching wins.

He was interviewed for the Inquirer by Chicago-based entrepreneur Rolando Blas who, with his gang, helped members of the ISF squad with their national needs during the tournament.

Interested, Blas told Tabanico was speechless moments after losing to younger, mustered Jun Manalo of Orion in yesterday's fight flyweight final.

"Pala talagan sira, na-compplained," Blas said of the 10-second cycling team standout, reported.

* * *

Tabanico has every reason to be frustrated.

He fought gallantly for what could've been ISF's first gold medal in the World Championship.

But, without meaning to slight the veteran campaigner, his defeat at the hands of the sharp, wily Jon, could be a blessing disguise.

A gold medal win would've sent our amateur boxing cell into celebrating and claiming success in their Chicago session.

There would have been something like a ticket tips embrace hands, however, en-

* * *

BARE EYE

Rivah Trinidad

At least, there's consolation in the possibility that, with practically all the ISF boxers falling at the wayside, the debacle in Chicago could finally open the eyes of those officials, the ones' hands that hold the purse strings but tend to wander out loud what saved among other extraneous empty-handed from both the Olympiads in Sydney and Athens.

* * *

In watching the gold medal bout, Tabanico had demonstrated that the RP boxing team, perennial top hope for Olympic medals, must break away from a shallow opinion that bad paisleys nothing but cotton eggs from the Olympics presently a decade.

Despite having silkened the gold medal to dip, Tabanico had delivered the clear message that changes in the national amateur boxing set-up must be thorough and truly portentous.

At least, this time they did not have to wait and return from the Beijing Summer Games with another tired drag team, the way they had done in both Sydney and Athens.

The make-up call has some truth behind.

* * *

It's like this: If the likes of flyweight Violito Payla, a certified shagger, cannot be converted into a thinking, calculating boxer, if he can't be tamed of his urge to out-slug decide instead of outsmart and outpoint his opponents, then should be drastic changes in the team composition, no matter how late.

The manner behind unconventional defender are too huge and dear to be overlooked.

It's odd, however, that top officials of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP), who volunteered to work as coaches, have had to be repeatedly roused from deep slumber.

They rely on a home program that borne so much to look and dismay.

In fact, their wake-up call to Chicago may not be enough to send them on their toes.

Ruel, Cuarto hurdle PCA Open rivals

TWO-TIME WOMEN'S RUEL JR. and Gil Cuarto survived contending wins Saturday to reach the second round of the 20th Philippine Columbian Association Open Tennis Championships at the Club's indoor courts.

Ruel, a former NP Girls Zonal champ at the Cuarto indoor courts.

Ruel, a former NP Girls Zonal champ at the Cuarto indoor courts.

Ruel defeated Kim Gatus, 6-3, 6-4, to advance against World Junior campaigner Joshua Tan Jac, who ousted PCA Open Junior champ Mark Galon, 6-1, 6-2.

Cuarto crashed the UAAP-bound GP women's team, rallied to beat Kyle Claudio, 3-6, 6-1, 6-1, and arrange a rematch with Joseph Vivencio.

SPECIAL CASHIER! Quezon City 4th district councilor Ariel Inton does the ceremonial toss during the opening of the Philippine Dual Basketball League organized by the Philippine Dual Life and Sport Club, Inc. (PDLSC) hosted by Simeonian Toa at the Colegio de San Lorenzo Sports Complex in Congressional Avenue, Quezon City, recently.

RP five revamp looms in tomorrow's meeting

By Jaymine M. Paya

MORWOOD

A REVAMP MAY BE IN THE offing for the national basketball team set to see action in the final Seoul leg of Centro in Thailand next December.

The Harbour Philippine team shocked its second host playing as a guest squad in the Philippine Basketball League recently, prompting team officials to set an emergency meeting tomorrow with PAP manufacturing Basketball (a Filipino president Manny V. Pangilinan).

"The debut is alarming since other countries, especially Malaysia, Indonesia and host Thailand, are preparing hard for the coming SEA Games," said Mikee Romero, Harbour Centro owner and project director of the SEAG squad.

Aside from tapping more amateur stars, the basketball czar is keeping to acquire players from the pro ranks.

"We have to address the problem of the team this early and we plan to confront our proposals with Commissioner Bernaldez," said Romero.

The 6'2" Espinos have already offered the services of Rumalde de Guzman—who suited up for the all-pro national team at the Fiba Asia championship in Tokushima, Japan—and key players Arwind Santos, Wynne Arboleda and dare Jewel champion Eli Cavalerio.

In fact, Eliot woke up call in Chicago may not be enough to send them on their toes.

Supposed by Making Channel 76, BC 13 is done cooperation with sportsman Edwin Bedrigan, the event set on June 24 will feature eight professional players teaming up with eight gorgeous ramp models. It will coincide with the celebration of the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard)'s Congress.

Bedrigan intends to hold a fund rib in Sacred Heart, Quezon City, to discover future world champions in the likes of Rosario Abrio (2004), Alex Pagulayan (2006) and Efren "Bata" Reyes (1994).

Other players invited to play in the event are Benito Orcullo, Bonnie Alcaraz, Jeffrey De Luna, Roberto Gomez, Gandy Vela, Jhaycon Hernandez and Carlo Biado.

Marilou Bermudez, Contributor

SPORTSWATCH

PSA Forum tomorrow

WOMEN POWERHOUSES TOMORROW'S PSA forum at the Dalton's United Eastern Avenue branch as the country's top lists in beach volleyball and powerlifting grace the month session.

PSA executive Ramon Fresnosa and Hotel hosts and Hotel Master's powerlifting record holder Mitch Pinzon will appear in the public sports program and time are 12:30 pm. Free admission to all and sponsored by Shakey's and Pagcor.

UGBA 9-stag derby

THE METRO MANILA CLUBHOUSE OF UGBA Heritage Cup Basketball 9-Stag Derby 2007 starts today at San Juan Coliseum, with courts 10 qualifiers lined up.

Ramo Ilao, president of the United Gamecock Breeders Association (UGBA) said today's competition is exclusive only to members of the Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA).

Another qualifying round featuring 1.5-pit contenders will be staged on Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. at the same location, at Rm. 10 and 11 are open to other breeders.

Bakbakan today

FOUR DAYS OF DEPARTURE STAGE KICK-ing action tonight, today as the MEGA Bakbakan Cockpit 'D' Stag derby takes centerstage at the Araneta Coliseum.

Three-stag eliminations will be held today and on Nov. 1 and 8, and Rizza Palomares, president of the National Federation of Gamecock Breeders (NFGB).

Promoters Lito Orillaza, Frank Salud and William Co of WE eSports and Amusement Corp. said members of the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) will also find entries today.

Gabica seeks 3rd Mixed Doubles crown

ANTONIO "GALA" GABICA GYES his third local title this year when he competes in the San Miguel Corporation (SMC) Mixed Doubles Bowery and the best-of-fistfall championship at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone (SBFZ) in Zambales.

The 26-year-old Gabica recently topped the 4th San Miguel Beer 9-Ball Open when he pocketed P500,000. He also topped the SMC

GABICA

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Nadal, Nalbandian set up Paris battle

RAFAEL Nadal flirts' championship mark in three months. REUTERS

PARIS – RAFAEL NADAL WILL PLAY David Nalbandian in the Paris Masters Final, and Richard Gasquet clinched the last place for the season-ending Masters Cup despite losing his semifinal match.

Second-seeded Nadal beat Marcos Baghdatis, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3, Saturday and Nalbandian defeated 10th-seeded Gasquet, 6-2, 6-4.

But Gasquet already had enough points for the Nov. 11-18 event in Shanghai before stepping onto the court because Baghdatis had lost.

Nalbandian is going for a second straight Masters title Sunday after winning in Madrid last month, where he dominated Nadal, 6-1, 6-2, in the quarterfinals.

The Argentine doesn't expect it to be an easy title finish.

"I think here it is little different than Madrid," Nalbandian said. "It's a little slow, and it's maybe a little bit better for him."

Nadal, who rendered his first final since July 22, said his form has improved since that loss.

"My expectations were only to play well, so I didn't think about the final," Nadal said. "I said before the tournament that I just wanted to play good because my goal was to finish the season with good feelings. Today I started playing very good."

Gasquet accepted he was "a level under" Nalbandian.

"I'm not sure I played a player as good as he is," Gasquet said. "Even when I played (Roger) Federer an time I never felt that way."

Nalbandian downed three his backhand is back to its brutal best after a fifth straight win over Gasquet.

"Backhand, forehand, he really plays well," Gasquet said. "Even if I play my best tennis, even then I'm not sure I could win!"

CAUGHT Nalbandian returns the ball to France's Richard Gasquet in their semifinal match in the Paris Open. REUTERS

Davenport in finals

In Quebec City, Lindsay Davenport advanced to the Bell Challenge final, beating second-seeded Alona Bondarenko of Russia, 6-2, 6-7 (21), 6-3.

Davenport is playing her third event since the birth of her first child in June. The three-time Grand Slam champion will face third-seed Julia Vakulenko of Ukraine. AP

Defensive Rockets blast Blazers, gain 3-0 start

HOUSTON – THE HOUSTON ROCKETS have a new look, fast-paced offense under Coach Rick Adelman.

So a ball on Saturday night, the defense looked as stingy as it did under Jeff Van Gundy.

Yao Ming had 21 points and 12 rebounds and Tracy McGrady added 20 points and six assists as the Rockets improved to 3-0 for the first time since the 2005-06 season with an 89-80 win over Portland.

Yao scored only eight points and McGrady only five in the second half, but the Rockets stayed in control with their defense, forcing 18 turnovers and holding the Blazers to 41 percent shooting (31 of 76).

Portland started making baskets when the outcome was decided. The Blazers trailed by 11 at the break after shooting 29.7 percent (11 of 37) and committing 13 turnovers in the first half.

"We made 'em take tough shots, we committed a lot of fouls, we kept them out of the paint," said McGrady, who had nine of Houston's eight steals.

Brandon Roy scored 23 and former Texas star LaMarcus Aldridge added 20 for Portland, off to its first 0-3 start since the 1997-98 season.

Following a 47-point effort at Utah on Thursday, McGrady started 4-for-8, then went 4-for-15 the rest of the way. He went 2-for-7 in the second half and even missed a dunk.

The Rockets never needed big games from their All-Star because the Blazers were off target from the start.

Houston opened with an 18-4 run as Portland missed 14 of its first 17 shots. Yao and McGrady scored 20 points together in the first quarter as Houston built a 31-12 lead.

In their first two games, the Rockets fell behind early in Los Angeles and Utah and rallied to win both times.

"We came out better," McGrady said. "The last two games, we've been kind of flat. For the most part, we came out ready to roll in that first quarter."

Yao flipped in a turnaround jumper to start a 9-0 burst that pushed the lead over 20 early in the second quarter. Yao hit six of his first eight shots.

The Blazers cut Houston's lead to 15 before McGrady returned after a long rest. He hit two long jumpers, then drove through traffic for another basket to stretch the lead to 42-23.

"We need to get off to a better start," Roy said. "We can't dig such a big hole when a team then is as good as Houston."

Channing Frye and Aldridge scored inside in the first minute of the third quarter as Portland closed the deficit to 11. The Rockets missed their first five shots before Glenn Hayes made a layup off an assist from McGrady.

The Blazers hit 7 of their first 9 shots after the break and Roy's pull-up jumper with 4:01 left in the third quarter pulled Portland to within eight at 54-46. Out of a time-out, Mc-Grady found Luis Scola for an easy layup to restore the double-digit lead.

Portland missed its last eight shots of the third quarter and Houston led 62-46 heading to the fourth.

Though the Blazers couldn't cut into their deficit, Coach Nate McMillan liked what he saw from his team out of half time.

"They came out with fire and fight and even inside more aggressive in the second half," he said.

Roy scored and slid the Blazers' thought, but Mike James answered with a long jumper from the wing. James was 3-for-7 from 3-point range and scored 17 for Houston.

The teams virtually traded baskets until Aldridge scored twice to cut the deficit to eight in the final two minutes. McGrady finished off Portland with a three-pointer from the wing with 1:20 left that put the Rockets up 85-72.

The Blazers failed to reach 20 points in any of the first three quarters, then outscored Houston 34-27 in the fourth.

"I'm not satisfied with the way we executed down the stretch," McGrady said. AP

COMPLETE RESULTS
NBA STANDINGS

HOUSTON Rockets' Yao Ming is blocked by Portland Trail Blazers' Travis Outlaw in the fourth quarter. The Rockets rose for their first 3-0 start in 11 years. REUTERS

A-Rod to Yankees: Let's talk $350M

NEW YORK – THE NEW YORK YANKees were told $350 million was the starting point for discussions about retaining Alex Rodriguez, but baseball's biggest free agent, local newspapers reported on Saturday.

Citing club and major league sources, local media reported that agent Scott Boras told the Yankees it would take at least a $350 million extension to Rodriguez's deal, which had three years remaining on the original 10-year, $252 million agreement.

The two sides spent just five to-three on extension and Rodriguez resigned during Game four of the World Series that Rodriguez was exercising an escape clause in the deal originally signed with Texas to declare himself a free agent.

The Yankees had planned to sit for Rodriguez, 32, a five-year extension for about $300 million, club sources said.

Rodriguez had 10 days from the end of the World Series as a deadline for becoming a free agent.

He had a stellar season, leading the majors with 114 home runs and 156 runs batted in. Reuters

Calzaghe grabs WBA, WBC belts

CARDIFF, WALES – UNDEFEATED JOE Calzaghe seized Mikkel Kessler's WBA and WBC world titles on Sunday and is since again surrounded by super middleweight belts.

Unanimously outpointing a previously undefeated Dane seven years his junior, the 3-1 favorite Welshman once again proved he gets better as he gets older. He shook off the Dane's powerful right hands and finished strongly for his 46th victory in a row and 21st defense of the WBO title during back 10 years.

"To win the four major title belts, to be the undisputed champion and to unify the division – it's just amazing and I'm so proud," said Calzaghe, who said it could well be his final fight at 168 pounds before he finishes his career as a light heavyweight.

"An extra seven pounds at this stage in my career – 38 years a champion, four super belts – what else is there to do? The all those guys up – Roy Jones, Bernard Hopkins, come on let's do it.

"I want to fight the big fights and hopefully this will set that up for the big fight and Hopkins will come out of hiding."

Calzaghe stayed with three standout rounds in the Millennium Stadium to unify the three titles in front of 35,000 of his fans.

After both fighters traded big shots and combinations in all 12 rounds, the three judges gave the decision to Calzaghe by scores of 117-111, fellow American Jules Kimmel had it 116-112 and Massimo Barrovecchio of Italy scored it 116-112. AP

Cabrera nips Singh; RP golfers way off

SINGAPORE – ANGEL CABRERA OF Argentina lifted the $4 million Singapore Open title after fending off a spirited Vijay Singh of Fiji by one shot in a thrilling three-way finish.

The Top 50 ding Cabrera birdied the last hole on a sun-baked Sentosa course at Sentosa Golf Club to add to his US Open success, closing out Asia's richest national Open with a one-over-par 71 and an eight-under par 276 winning total.

Singh, who started the day on cut the lead, mounted a brave title charge with a one-course record 67 but came up just short at the end against a man who earned the world's record golfers of nearly $2,000 spectators with his power play.

Angelo Que emerged the best 35-plus finishes at joint 23rd, being a final-round two-over 73 for a 284 total.

Rhett Pinsey and former champion Anthony Fernando were tied with three others at 43rd spot at 291. Arvin Ingcasiano settled for joint 52nd at 293, and Tony Lascuña finished at joint 62nd with a 906 aggregate.

Title holder Adam Scott of Australia could not up their following a 71, finishing the behind the new champion while American rookie Jin Park enjoyed his biggest payday by finishing fourth in the star-studded event with a closing 70.

Asia's best finisher was Yuta Ikeda of Japan, who was tied with Thai Prom Meesawat, also on 284 after a 71. Asian Tour News

ANGEL Cabrera watches his putt on the 72nd green during the Singapore Open final round. REUTERS

Top US runner dies in Olympic marathon trial

NEW YORK – TOP DISTANCE RUNner Ryan Shay died during the U.S. team's Olympic marathon trials Saturday after collapsing about 5 1/2 miles (9 kilometers) into the race.

Shay was taken to Lenox Hill Hospital and was pronounced dead, New York Road Runners president Mary Wittenberg said. He was 26.

"It cuts a knife through everybody's hearts," said Wittenberg.

Shay's father, Joe, said his son was first diagnosed with a heart murmur at age 14.

The elder Shay said the assessment from his son was cleared for running the spring by doctors but was told he might have need of a pacemaker when he is older. AP

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Chris Jimenez of the Makati Mustangs dives to beat the throw to third baseman Felgencio Ramos of the Cebu Dolphins.

Roxas' solo homer lifts Manila IX

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VIRGILIO ROXAS BROKE UP THE DEEL

Laylo tangles with Bacrot

ELAM DUMAGIN: At 21 runaway and young (one date dunk champ 6'2 Candela (right) pays a courtesy call on Federal Tyres sales manager Ike Ilala Norman Ching and Federal Tyres head Ronnie Co recently.

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BUSINESS

Gita Rauth Marcelo ✦ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BSP, gov't OK bond offering to OFWs

Initial size of $500M planned in early 2008

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas have agreed to offer pioneering retail treasury bonds to overseas Filipino workers worth at least $500 million starting early 2008.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo told reporters the government could initially launch $500 million in the market, then issue another $500 million should OFWs show more appetite for these bonds. Or it could be as much as a $1-billion offering right away depending on market reception, he said.

"We will put together the package, hopefully before the year ends," Guinigundo said.

He said the national government had agreed "in principle" that an initial size of $500 million would be viable, noting that the $200-million size proposed by state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines was too small to make a significant contribution to the government's infrastructure roadmap.

The offering will be carved out of the national government's existing refinancing requirements that could otherwise be assumed from the commercial market, he said.

Guinigundo said the retail treasury bonds would likely be auctioned off in the domestic market, targeting OFW money already placed in the banking system's foreign currency deposit units (FCDUs).

"If you offer abroad, there will be cross-border issues so the offering must be here," Guinigundo said. "But you can

BIN 11

Korean firm keen on nuke plant in RP

By Abigail L. Ho

KOREAN GOVERNMENT-RUN Korea Electric Power Corp. is now in "unofficial" talks with the Philippine government regarding the possible re-firing of the mothballed 620-megawatt (MW) Bataan Nuclear Power Plant or the establishment of a new nuclear power facility.

In an interview with reporters, Arroyo-Asia business department director general Kyung Goo Han said the company had expressed interest to develop a nuclear power facility in the Philippines as early as several years ago.

"Koryo sees a three-suggesting to study and research the construction of a nuclear power plant in the Philippines a couple of years ago, but the government has yet to send its response. PROBABLY the government thinks it will take some time. They understand the difficulties of the public acceptance issue, considering the experience with the Bataan plant," he said.

Despite that, he said Koryo was still open to the idea of helping the country tap nuclear resources for power generation...whether by way of re-firing the BNPP or putting up an entirely new facility.

Talks with the Philippine government, however, were all "unofficial" at this point, he said.

B4

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

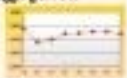
41.475 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Oct. 31, 2007

Sharp Dow drop seen dragging stocks

SHARE PRICES ARE EXPECTED TO take their cue from third-quarter earnings announcement and Wall Street's sharp selloff last Thursday, analysts said.

However, local interest rate cuts may provide some temporary boost to the stock market, they added.



(See stock market report on Page B3)

American financial giant Citigroup sees the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas cutting further its benchmark interest rates by 25 basis points when its policy-making Monetary Board meets on Nov. 15.

Stock investors are expected to shrug off a widely anticipated quarter-point interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve during its meeting last Oct. 31.

"The way the market works is that it usually takes its cue from how the Dow (Jones) reacts and the Dow was down by 360 points during last Thursday's so big banks got hit by downgrades," said

SHARE B3

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Unequal incomes

RECENTLY RELEASED RESULTS from the 2006 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) reveal a disturbing finding. Filipinos' average real family income actually fell between 2003 and 2006. "Real" here means the data are adjusted for inflation—by cutting the incomes in both years using the same set of prices—so that one is not misled by the effect of rising prices. According to the FIES data, average family income in nominal terms (that is, expressed in the prevailing prices for those years) rose from P166,000 in 2003 to P172,000 in 2006, or a 10.2 percent rise. But prices rose by 20.6 percent in the same period, which means that the rising income still failed to catch up with the increase in prices. Thus, average family income in 2006, if measured in 2003 prices, would have been only P140,000, as found by the FIES.

The average family incomes cited above are derived simply by dividing total family incomes by the total number of families (17.4 million in 2006). Thus it implicitly assumes that every family gets an equal slice of the GDP birthday cake. But everyone knows that some get bigger slices than others, and that families in the Philippines are far from equal. Just how unequal are they?

There are at least three numerical indicators one can use to measure how even or uneven income distribution is in a country. Economists and statisticians commonly use a measure called the Gini coefficient, whose meaning is difficult to explain without resorting to graphs. Suffice it to say here that its value can vary between 0 and 1 (or 0 and 100 if expressed as a percentage). A value of zero denotes perfect equality (i.e. everyone gets an equal slice), while a value of 1 or 100 percent denotes absolute inequality (i.e. the richest family gets the entire kitchen). The higher the Gini coefficient, the more unequal the distribution.

The data show that the richest quintile had 11 times more income than the poorest quintile in 2006, a slight improvement from the 11.3 ratio in 2003. If based on deciles, the ratio was 17.8 to 1 in 2006, against 20.1 in 2003. That is, the richest 10 percent of Filipinos have about 20 times the income of the poorest 10 percent.

Wider gaps

The good news is that even while average family income fell from 2003 to 2006, income distribution improved slightly within the same period.

The bad news, though, is that income distribution had been even better in 1988, when the income ratio of the richest quintile to the poorest quintile was only 10 to 1, and that of the richest decile to the poorest decile was just 17.8 to 1. By 1991, those ratios had risen to 11.5 and 22, respectively, suggesting that income gaps widened through the Aquino administration. The early part of the Ramos administration appears to have succeeded in narrowing the gap, with the top to bottom quintile and decile ratios declining to 10.6 and 18.7 respectively. But the respective ratios rose again to 12.6 and 23.1 in 1997, evidence that the Asian financial crisis hit the poor much more severely than the rich. The latest data years now these ratios improving again somewhat to 12.3 and 22.0 by 2000, and improved further under Arroyo to 11.2 and 20.3 by 2003, and now 11 and 19.1 in the latest available data. We have yet to regain what we had already achieved 10 years ago!

International comparisons

How does our income distribution compare with other countries?

Our closest neighbors are actually doing better than us. Thailand's top-to-bottom quintile ratio is 8.6, with a Gini coefficient of 0.427 (calculated data from a compilation by the World Bank). Vietnam is even more equitable, with corresponding ratio of only 6 and Gini coefficient of 0.366. Surprisingly, even poorer Asian countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are more equitable than ours, with ratios of 4 and 4.6, and Gini coefficients of 0.27 and 0.317 respectively. Japan, interestingly, is one of the most equitable societies in the world, with a top-to-bottom quintile ratio of 3.4, and a Gini coefficient of only 0.249 (as of the 1990s).

It may be of some consolation that the US has worse income distribution than ours, with a quintile ratio of 14.7 and Gini coefficient of 0.469 (as of 2000). But even worse are the Latin American countries. Brazil has a quintile ratio of 22 and Gini coefficient of 0.586. Chile has a ratio of 15.5 and Gini coefficient 0.566. And the rest of those neighbors have similar figures. But the prize for most inequitable of all goes to Zimbabwe, in Africa, with a quintile ratio of a whopping 89 to 1, and Gini coefficient of 0.737!

No reason to be contented with what we have, somehow, as our own standards should be closer to home.

Comments welcome at chabito@abinet.edu

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BSP, gov't OK bond offering to OFWs

From page B1

market abroad but the payment should be made here."

The government is studying how the OFW bonds could be promoted abroad without violating the investor protection rules of host countries. The government is also studying whether the proposed bonds would be denominated in pesos or dollars.

Gutierrez said that if the government were to offer an initial P300 million, that would mean the government could raise the equivalent P19 billion through an auction worth 6% billion every first- or second Tuesday of each month.

He said this strategy would no longer require the government to conduct costly roadshows.

"What we'll do is to hold a widespread information campaign, put up good advertisement in newspapers, television and radio that there's such an OFW bond," Gutierrez said.

The proposed OFW bond measure is a central point OFW advocacy in economic development while giving OFW households lucrative investment outlets. These savings and investments are seen helping prepare OFWs for future reintegration into the Philippine economy and providing additional funding for government requirements, including for infrastructure development.

The BSP believes the government can raise $1 billion each year from these proceeding bonds based on the assumption that OFWs could set aside about 10 percent of their earnings for investments.

Based on an interval study by the BSP on remittances, the challenge with regard to the OFW remittance phenomenon—a big factor behind the peso's upturn—was not so much the large flows coming in but in directing these private flows toward productive activities.

"While there are private remittances, the government can ensure that the policy environment is conducive in the use of these remittances for investments in the country through such as entrepreneurial endeavors and investments in better healthcare, education and housing for the families of remittors," the BSP study said.

Contrary to the common belief that remittances flow in abundance whether in good times or bad, the BSP study also suggested that prospects of the local economy and the peso-dollar movement now influence overseas Filipinos' appetite to send money over more than the sheer remittance to help families back home.

Policymakers should therefore not be drawn into complacency that remittances can indefinitely help the economy weather economic downturns. "There is no substitute for prudent macroeconomic policies," the study said.

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Launched by Goldshine Pharmaceutical, Inc. in 2005, Jimm's 5in1 Coffee quickly became known as an enjoyable and healthy alternative to regular coffee.

In addition to caffeine that perks you up and coffee's natural antioxidants that help fight harmful toxins, Jimm's 5in1 Coffee contains Korean ginseng, which is considered by many to improve physical and mental stamina, and Agaricus Blazei Mushroom extract, a known stress-buster. This combination has made, for many, coffee break a Jimm's habit.

A new television commercial promoting Jimm's 5in1 Coffee is now airing during daytime & primetime shows of the two largest television stations in the country.

"We want more people to be able to experience and enjoy the benefits of Jimm's 5in1 Coffee," says Mr. Gani Sinsuwanchon, Goldshine Pharmaceutical's National Sales and Marketing Director.

Goldshine Pharmaceutical also recently signed a new contract with its biggest distributor, GNP Trading Corporation, to make sure that you can find Jimm's 5in1 Coffee in stores anytime, anywhere.

Mr. Jaime Serato, President of Goldshine Pharmaceuticals, and Mr. George Nocom Pua, President of GNP, signed the contract last 24 October 2007 at Promenade in Greenhills.

PRIME MAKATI PROPERTIES FOR SALE
Prencel Tai & Associates

Korean ...

From page B1

The biggest hurdle for the government is awareness, he said, was the lack of public acceptance for nuclear facilities because of the perceived dangers that these entailed.

One way for the government to overcome this issue—apart from ensuring that it had enough knowledge and skill in set up and run a nuclear power facility—was to prove to the people that they could significantly reduce power costs.

In the case of Korea, for example, he related that roughly 40 percent of its power supply came from nuclear sources. In effect, power rates in Korea are among the cheapest in the world.

"We have very low electricity tariffs even as compared to other advanced countries. So if you have nuclear power in the Philippines, current power rates can be reduced," he said.

For the past 14 years that Korea had been engaged in nuclear power generation, he said no untoward incident has occurred. Nor is mention that electricity rates had gone up significantly over those years.

"If you can manage the power plant efficiently and effectively, rates will not have to worry about the security issue so much," he said.

In an earlier interview, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the government was seriously considering the possibility of going into nuclear power generation.

This, however, would take 15-20 years to accomplish.

"It takes 15-20 years to put up a nuclear power plant, around seven years of which would be spent on a comprehensive study as well as on building up our human resource pool," he said.

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Zest-O completes buyout of Dubai firm for ₱600M

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL BEVERAGE MANUFACTURER Zest-O Corp. has completed its acquisition of Dubai-based Arab Beverages Establishment (ABE), the world's biggest producer of fruit juice stock in drypack packs, for P600 million.

Zest-O chair Alfredo Yao said the buyout of ABE, which uses packaging similar to the company's flagship brand Zest-O, was recently finalized and that his company was looking for other expansion opportunities abroad.

ABE produced the Capri-Sonne fruit juice, under license from Capri-Sun AG Switzerland, but the contract expired this year, prompting the Dubai company to look for a new group to continue its operations. Negotiations with Zest-O started late last year.

The Dubai manufacturer was founded in 1984 and alongside with producing Capri-Sonne, it distributes Activ O2, V Energy Drink and Ringhar Honey in the United Arab Emirates market. In Dubai, ABE has the capacity to produce at least 20,000 packets an hour.

Zest-O is the world's second biggest producer of natural fruit juice concentrate in drypack next to Capri-Sonne, with flavors in orange, strawberry, pineapple, guyabano, mango, mango-orange, apple, grape, mango-calamansi, mango-lemongrass and calamansi. The company also produces the bottled iced tea brand Dee.

The Philippine company is likewise expanding elsewhere in the fast-growing Asian region, particularly in China, Indonesia and Vietnam. Prior to the Dubai deal, Zest-O has earlier purchased another beverage company in China.

Sharp Dow drop

... From page B1

Joseph Reiss, president at Argile Equities Inc., said.

Several US analysts have issued research news in recent days on concern about banks' and brokerages' exposure to the right credit markets and the likelihood that further write-downs were in the offing.

Another major risk to the stock market is the surging crude oil price, which may temper corporate earnings and stoke inflation that could further push up borrowing costs in the future, some analysts said. World crude held at $98 a barrel over the weekend as concerns about tight supplies before winter capped a major selloff.

SEC Capital Securities said it is a daily note to choose that investors would also be looking at third quarter earnings results, which should give investors a better feel on the market.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. is set to hold a teleconference on Nov. 6 for its nine-month earnings results. Ayala Globe Telecom is also holding an investors' briefing on Nov. 7 for its third-quarter results.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

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To ease impact of soaring oil, gov't set to cut import duties

But strong peso seen to temper effects of rise in world oil

By Michelle V. Rerra

THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED TO slash import duties on oil once threshold price levels were reached, in an effort to ease the impact of soaring oil costs on domestic commodity prices.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the government's economic team has agreed to cut oil tariffs if prices continue to soar to avoid buildup of inflationary pressures.

He said the 3 percent duty on imported oil would be cut to 2 percent, using an exchange rate of P45 to a dollar, once Dubai crude reaches $81.92, and diesel hits $94.33 a barrel.

Teves noted though that, as of the end of October, the trigger prices have not been reached yet. Dubai was still at $84.53 a barrel, he said.

The finance chief added that the import tariff would be slashed further to only one percent once Dubai crude hits $104.84.

Teves said the trigger prices for a reduction in import duties were determined based on a formula that would yield no revenue loss for the government. The foregone potential revenues resulting from the tariff cut would be offset by the additional duty revenues arising from the increase in prices, he explained.

Oil prices in the world market has been on the rise amid fresh concerns of a supply shortage with the entry of the winter months, and perceived resistance from major oil producers to increase output.

Rising oil prices raised concerns on its effect on the purchasing power of Filipinos, such the Philippines importing bulk of its oil requirements.

The government's economic managers, however, said the increase in oil prices was still not so alarming as many perceived. They noted that the foolish peso was offsetting the impact of higher oil prices.

An appreciation of the peso makes imported goods cheaper.

Last week, the peso broke into the 47-to-a-dollar territory, which monetary officials credited to the increase in dollar remittances and foreign investments. This was much stronger than the average foreign-exchange rate of P48.021 assumed by economic managers for 2007.

Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. admitted that the spike in oil prices would have an impact on commodity prices next year, but added this was unlikely to affect the government's inflation target. For 2008, the BSP hopes to limit inflation between 3 and 5 percent.

"The effect may be somewhat mitigated by such factors as the stronger peso," Tetangco said. "The BSP will continue to monitor this so that any second round effect, or upward shift in inflation expectations, is properly ... addressed."

Myrna Asuncion, officer in charge of the Neda's policy and planning division, said the rise in oil prices was also not enough to keep the economy from reaching the government's growth target.

She said the rise in oil prices was not enough reason for the economy to fall short of the 7.0- to-8.0 percent growth target for this year because of the strengthening of the peso and other favorable factors.

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BOC set to sell, not smash, luxury vehicles

IN AN EFFORT TO MEET ITS COLLECTION goal for the year, the Bureau of Customs asked for and received Malacañang's approval to sell the smuggled luxury vehicles the agency seized, instead of smashing them.

"I asked the President if [the BOC] could sell the vehicles, instead of destroying them, because we are in need of additional revenues," Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales told reporters. "The presidential decision of Customs is to collect revenue for the government."

Morales said that, after the President agreed to his request, the BOC placed the luxury vehicles on the list of forfeited assets to be sold.

According to Morales, he is under the impression that Malacañang may never again order the destruction of seized vehicles after the BOC received the go-ahead to sell the high-priced items.

Hoping to put teeth into the government's anti-smuggling drive, President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier ordered the destruction of smuggled luxury vehicles. Three months ago, 10 such vehicles were destroyed and turned into metal scraps at the Naval Supply Depot in Subic Bay Freeport.

At that time, critics slammed the move, saying the government should have instead sold the vehicles to make money out of them. The luxury vehicles, worth millions of pesos, were all reduced to metal scrap worth an estimated P350,000.

Morales said there were 17 other smuggled luxury vehicles that were supposed to be destroyed but were put on the BOC's auction block. One was sold last month.

The luxury vehicles include, among others, brand new Nissan SUV Audi, BMW and Cadillac units, whose floor prices range from P2.3 million to P6.5 million.

Morales said he was hoping to sell all the vehicles before the end of the year to boost the BOC's revenue collection.

The Customs chief said the BOC had set the floor prices of the vehicles, which include proper excise tax and duty, to almost match their regular market prices. This was to temper any excessive zeal expected to be displayed by the smugglers would get to retrieve their vehicles through the BOC auctions.

"If smugglers indeed are the ones participating in the auctions, then they should pay what is necessary if they want to get the vehicles," Morales said. "The floor prices are set more based on market prices."

The BOC, the second biggest revenue earner for the government, after the Bureau of Internal Revenue, is tasked to collect P608.2 billion this year. The amount is consistent with the government's goal of limiting its budget deficit to P85 billion from last year's P364.8 billion.

Mha Isabel G. Reyes

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of October 31, 2007)

TKC Steel posts 160% growth in revenues

By Elizabeth Sandra-Lucas

TKC STEEL CORP. SAID ITS REVENUES surged 160 percent to P3.3 billion in the first nine months from P1.25 billion in the same period last year, boosted by higher production of steel billets, the basic material used for construction.

In a statement, TKC Steel said the growth momentum was propelled by increased billet production of Transcast Steelworks Corp. (TSC), its local subsidiary and the start of commercial operations of JZ Steelgold Steel Works Co. Ltd. (JZSS), its China-based unit, as well as favorable price trends.

Transcast Steelworks posted record revenues of P1.1 billion for the first nine months of 2007, an increase of 148 percent from the P1.23 billion recorded in the same period in 2006. Sales volume rose 66 percent to 124,813 metric tons (MT) for the nine-month period from 74,107 MT for the same period in 2006.

Despite having started commercial operations in the second quarter of 2007, it said JZSS is gradually growing its revenues, hitting P327 million from the period under review. For the third quarter of 2007, revenues were up 79 percent to P91.68 million from the second quarter's P51 million.

TKC president Anthony S. Dmochowski: "We are very pleased about the growth in revenues from both our operating subsidiaries. Even more important is that TKC-Steel is on its way to strengthening both our local and regional businesses that are deliberately set out for in time for our follow-on offering. The continued exceptional financial performance is an excellent indicator toward that direction."

TKC Steel recently signed a deal with a China-based import and export company, Xiamen Steelrex Ltd., which involves the installation of a blast furnace that will double TKC Steel's production capacity to 600,000 MT from 300,000 MT a year by the fourth quarter of 2008.

JZSS is also set to double its production capacity for spiral pipes to 80,000 MT from 40,000 MT by adding an additional production line that will be fully operational by the first quarter of 2008.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that

ROSARIO MAXIMA HENSON

has been issued **WARRANTS OF ARREST** by the Municipal Trial Court of Mabalacat, Pampanga as per Criminal Case numbers 06-131 to 06-146. Any information that may lead to her arrest may be communicated to Police at tel. no. (045) 961-8115 / 961-8775.

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Clusival Power-C partners with Kapuso Foundation

AS PART OF ITS COMMITMENT OF CARING FOR THE health of Filipinos, Wyeth Consumer Healthcare has recently launched its "Power Pintadapat" project under its brand Clusival Power C. The project aims to contribute in making the lives of the less fortunate become healthier by providing millions worth of Clusival Power C to different communities and public organizations. According to Cyril Briones, product manager of Clusival Power C, the group has come up with this effort to share its success to the public. "Clusival Power C has been doing well in the market ranked No. 2 for a year and a half already and it's about time that we give back to others the success of the brand by helping the less capable" Briones added. Targeting organizations that have wide coverage, Wyeth Consumer Healthcare has decided to give its first batch of donations to GMA Kapuso Foundation. He added that the group wanted to start the project by partnering with an organization that is known for its good services to people who are in need of medical assistance. GMA Kapuso Foundation received P1 million worth of pills of bottles of Clusival Power C. Benito Dela Fuente Jr., executive director of the foundation, believes that the donations is a big help to their organization. "We rely heavily on the goodness and generosity of other people. Definitely, Clusival Power C donations have a huge impact and to mention that we have a number of projects catering to health services and medical treatment." Dela Fuente Jr. added that the donations of Clusival Power C will be very much useful for the foundation's Bingi Mason (the medical assistance program) and Kalusugan Contest (medical assistance program) for the foundation. He said that Clusival Power C is to extend a lot of beneficiaries of these programs. Meanwhile, when asked about the sustainability of the partnership, Briones said that this is just the start of their partnership with GMA Kapuso Foundation.

INDIA'S 3RD BIGGEST BPO TAPS UCPB

Indian multinational Aditya Birla Minacs Worldwide Ltd (ABML), which is the 3rd biggest business process outsourcing (BPO) firm in India has tapped UCPB to provide cash management services for its call center in the Philippines. Dexter Alfonso of the Branch by IT manager Cristhur Bautista, Treasury manager Maureen Cang and Ms. Aniceto Martin Manager (first) secured and Rosalinda Arcilla (second) UCPB Sandhills manager Glenda Dulay (third from left) at ground ABML's newly opened facility in Eastwood, Quezon City. The facility will employ 2,000 contact agents.

OBITUARIES

REMEDIOS "REMMEE" GILE TAN-ABELLA

*November 29, 1946 * November 03, 2007*

You gave her peaceful rest; you joined our Maker
You left a void in our sore lives, but can't be managed to make us
Let us trust that we have one more angel
Who continues to guide and look after us

And so, we lovingly remember you today,
My Mommy, Nene, Ate, Tita Remmee & Mr.am...
For your strength and presence,
Your thoughtfulness and sweetness,
With celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
at 6:00 PM today
in the following churches:

Quezon City
Our Lady of Consolation Parish
9th Avenue Church, Grace Memorial
Immaculate Conception Cathedral

Manila
St. Jude Archdiocesan Shrine
Manor Basilica of the Holy Nazarene
Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help
Our Lady of Remedios Church

Sydney, Australia
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
Mary Immaculate Parish Church

With much love, your loving husband **HENRY**; Children & their spouses: **SEZE** (ING), **DHIN** & **DHEE**, **DHIN** & **ARLEN**; Grandchildren: **REIGN**, **RYN**, **GABO**, **HANS** & **JULIANA**; Parents: **RICARDO SR.** († & **VISITACION** (†); Brothers & sisters-in-law: **RUDY** & **JESSE**, **BEN** & **MARIVIC**, **JUN** († & **JAJA**, Sisters & brothers-in-law: **ROSSEL SALIE** & **RICHARD**, **RICKS** & **DANNY**, **RISSIE** & **GARRY**; nieces, nephews and the **EQUALIVET Family**.

"I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith."
2 Tim. 4:7, ESV

Maj. Gen. Alfonso P. Cagurangan, Jr. AFP (Ret.)
PMA Class '66

peacefully joined the Lord on Nov. 1, 2007
at the age of 63.

His wife, **Desiree** and children **Emmanuel** and **Racquel**, **Nathaniel** and **Glenda**, **Marita** and **GJ**, **Danny** and **Maggie**, and **Kathleen**; grandchildren and sisters, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Mortuary and Crematory of the Heritage Park.

Interment will be on Wednesday, November 7, 2007 at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Tagaig after the 9:00 a.m. mass at the Chapel 8, Heritage Park, Tagaig City.

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On the 11th Anniversary of

DIONISIO L. FALGUI, JR.

Former Provincial Prosecutor – Kalinga Province

who died on November 5, 1996.

Mass will be offered today at 6:30 a.m.
at St. Joseph Parish Church, Tabuk City, Kalinga.

His bereaved widow **Amor Palacio-Falgui**; children **William Dio** and **Brenda Onengan**, **Dionisio III** (**Dondi**) and **Loretta Gonzales**, **Richard Dio**, **Maria Diana** and **Thom John (Rocke) Dalsen**; grandchildren **Denise**, **Dioni**, **Morel**, **Lexi**, **Dio IV**, **Dinis**, **Andin**, **Erin**, **Kahli**, **Jana** and **Tingel**; sisters **Esperita**, **Reinelda**, **Florentina** and **Gloria**, in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers to remember him in their prayers.

Our Dearly Beloved

CAPT. EBENEZER P. MALACAMAN

(Land U.S.N. – November 1, 2007)

Peacefully joined our Creator
on November 1, 2007 at the age of 62.

His dearly wife **Lilia G. Malacaman**; our loving daughters **Ivy Nellie** (daughter **Cherie**, grandchild **MJ**) and **Jil** (relatives and friends) request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City.

Funeral Mass at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, November 7, 2007 and Interment follows at 4:00 p.m. at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

Death Notice

DEMETRIO G. CARLOS, JR.

July 30, 1957 – October 31, 2007

Interment ceremonies, November 6, 2007
at the Manila Garden Memorial Park after the 2:00 p.m. funeral mass
at the Chapel.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on the rock and gave me a firm place to stand."
Psalm 40:1-2

Greenfield earmarks ₱1B for expansion

Company putting up 'lifestyle center,' BPO offices

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacuna

PROPERTY FIRM GREENFIELD DEVELOPment Corp. of the Campos family is setting aside ₱1 billion for the expansion of its 300-hectare mixed-use community dubbed "Greenfield City" in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The new phase of the township project will include a high-end residential subdivision, office buildings and a commercial center.

In a statement, GDC chair Jeffrey Campos said the company was expanding the commercial area within Greenfield City by another 22 hectares to make room for a "lifestyle center" which will house more retail outlets. This will be in addition to its open-air mall called Town de Sta. Rosa, which covers 12 hectares.

The lifestyle center will be called "Laguna Central" and is estimated to cost about ₱200 million. It will feature upscale restaurants, specialty shops, cafes and bars.

Also part of the expansion plans, according to Campos, is the establishment of a Hospital Hub, estimated to cost ₱300 million, to further drive growth in the area.

For the residential development component, the company plans to undertake the next two phases of the recently launched Primavera residential park.

GDC executive vice president Duane Gomez said the company spent ₱400 million for the first phase of Primavera, which is now fully developed and is ready for occupancy. The first phase covers 25 hectares and the next phases will expand the area to 40 hectares.

GDC will also build two office buildings that will offer 6,000 square meters of leasable space to the booming business process outsourcing industry. Estimated to cost ₱260 million, the office buildings have part of the planned development of the 20-hectare Sta. Rosa Business Park within Greenfield City, which is envisioned to become a primary office and commercial zone in the area.

Greenfield City is also home to the "Greenfield Auto Park," a 65-hectare special economic zone where 25 hectares of land serve as a manufacturing facility for Ford Motor Phils. Inc., the world's second largest car firm.

Two other companies such as Mitsumi Philippines Corp. and Automotive Interiors Corp.—which are involved in the production of Ford's automotive electrical circuits and lining interiors—are also located within the car zone park.

"The Technopark Hotel is also strategically located here, providing for the needs of business executives in the area," a company official said.

Located within the economic zone (Greenfield Avenue), a five-hectare integrated automotive retail and commercial establishment catering to car dealership, car accessories and auto parts.

The Sta. Rosa Business Park in Greenfield City also houses the ₱1.89-million Southern Luzon Hospital and Medical Center, which was inaugurated last month by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

SLHMC is a tripartite medical institution and facility that will provide modern and state-of-the-art but affordable medical services to residents in the south. The hospital is managed by the Columbia Medical Center.

Deficient nonlife insurers given up to Dec. to raise networth

By Doris C. Dumlao

SIX OUT OF ABOUT 90 NONlife insurance companies operating in the Philippines have failed to comply with the ₱550-million minimum net worth required by the government before March 2006, official documents showed.

Deputy Insurance Commissioner Vida Chiong said these companies had committed to fill their deficiencies this year.

The deficient nonlife insurers include Insurance Life and Gen., CAP Gen. Insurance Corp., CA Life Insurance Corp. and CICI General Insurance Corp., the documents showed.

The other two—Covenant Insurance Co. Inc. and Tan Cam Surety Inc. Co.—had been slapped with cease and desist orders due to net worth deficiencies during the terms of former Insurance Commissioners Eduardo Ma. Morato and Gudelia Gerilla.

Chiong, however, said these false starts are understandable as companies comply with the net worth requirement by the end of this year.

She said some of the companies were awaiting the ruling of some of their issuers to renew their networth deficiency.

Industry members, she said, had complained about the staff requirements and the ICSad given these companies "a little consideration."

Chiong said authorities were "convinced that there's really money coming in (from companies)."

She said, however, that if they would fail to meet the requirement this year, these companies would be automatically slapped with their operating licenses.

Earlier, credit watchdog Standard & Poor's stressed the government's late implementation of capital adequacy rules in the Philippines.

The adequacy of an insurer's capital is determined through their margin of solvency ability to pay the claim and their paid-up capital.

The government earlier mandated a tighter capital-building program and introduced risk-based capital adequacy.

The Department of Finance has ordered the strict implementation of the ₱550-million minimum net worth requirement and the risk-based capital approach to strengthen and consolidate the nonlife insurance industry.

In the meantime, the nonlife insurance industry is improving its product offerings to jack up its modest penetration rate, which at present is only 1% percent.

The industry's profitability has, as forecast by reinsurers and investments, had changed to ₱ 4 percent this year from as high as 12 percent in previous years.

RP ranks 71st in WEF competitiveness index

By Dinah L. Lucas

THE SWITZERLAND ECONOMIC competitiveness improved slightly this year, although it remained one of the least competitive in the Southeast Asian region, according to the latest report of the World Economic Forum.

In the WEF Global Competitiveness Report 2007–2008, the Philippines was at No. 71, a base notch improvement over the rank of 71 last year.

The United States maintained its ranking as the world's most competitive economy due to "a winning combination of highly sophisticated and innovative companies operating in very efficient factor markets."

Singapore led the Southeast Asian region in the list, improving its rank to seventh from eighth place last year.

Among the eight Asean countries surveyed, the Philippines came ahead only of Cambodia and Timor Leste.

Other Asean countries that were included in the report were Malaysia (ranked 21st from 19th), Thailand (34th), Indonesia (54th) and Vietnam (68th from 74th).

Asean member Brunei, Laos and Myanmar were not included.

"The Asia region encompasses the entire gamut in our ranking, from highly competitive countries to the most disadvantaged, drawing an extremely heterogeneous picture with respect to the levels of growth and development achieved in the region," WEF's head of strategic insight center Fiona Paua said in a statement.

"Nine Asia-Pacific countries are among the top 36 in the Global Competitiveness Index rankings, led by Singapore, Japan (8th), Korea (11th) and Hong Kong SAR (13th), while Mongolia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and Timor-Leste are all positioned at the very bottom of the rankings," she added.

The rankings are determined based on publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a yearly survey conducted by the WEF with its network of partner institutes. In the Philippines, this survey is conducted by the Makati Business Club.

Globe's cable project seen ready by Sept. '08

By Roy T. Debuenos

GLOBE TELECOM INC.'S ₱90-million project to link the Philippines directly to the United States will be completed by September next year, officials said.

The project fulfills Globe's promise during the Cebu ICT 2007 in June that it would invest in more bandwidth facilities to meet growing demand for global investors' bandwidth.

The country's second largest telco will accomplish this as the exclusive Philippine landing party to the ₱260-million trans-Pacific cable project of Tata Group of India. The link is scheduled to be built to have two redundancies, according to Tata Group's Vidushi Sardesai Nigam Ltd. of MNI.

"The Philippine link will be completed around the same time, but it is scheduled to be operational two to three months later because it has to be electronically configured for the transmission network here," said Gil S. Cruz, head of Globe Telecom's Carrier Services and CEO of Innove Communications.

Globe's investment participation in VSNL's TGN-Intra Asia Cable System allows us to optimally increase our bandwidth capacity to meet the growing demand, and provide resilient and geographically diverse supply. It will significantly improve the competitiveness of the Philippines as a prime destination for outsourcing companies."

The system will also link the country to Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as provide a direct connection to Guam and the West Coast.

Globe's rival telco, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. group, is investing $100 million in a separate system.

Important message to smokers from JT International

No cigarette is safe

Cigarette companies have traditionally used various means to allow consumers to distinguish between products. These may be words like "light", "smooth", "mild" or pack colors, or other elements of product and pack design.

None of these elements of pack or product design, including the brand names, taste and flavor of our cigarettes, are intended to suggest that any cigarette is less harmful than any other.

In particular, tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide numbers printed on cigarette packs do not give individual smokers a precise figure of how much of these substances they inhale.

These numbers indicate the amount of tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide contained in the smoke of each cigarette in the pack when measured under standard conditions by a special smoking machine. They provide an internationally recognized method of comparison between different brands, used in many countries around the world by manufacturers and public authorities alike.

However, a smoking machine cannot replicate the way each individual smokes. Smokers puff on cigarettes in different ways and may inhale different amounts of tar and nicotine from what is indicated on the pack.

For instance, it is possible that when switching to cigarettes with lower tar and nicotine numbers, some smokers may vary the way they smoke and obtain to some extent the experience of smoking a higher tar and nicotine number product. They may do so, for example, by taking more puffs or larger puffs.

No cigarette is safe. So you should not switch to another type, flavor or strength of cigarettes on the assumption that it will lower your health risks from smoking. Switching is not a substitute for quitting. If you want to reduce or eliminate the health risks of smoking, quitting is the best choice for you. Many smokers have quit without help, but if you have difficulty quitting, you should consult a health professional.

JTI

BUSINESS

Inflation risks may prompt BSP to cut key rates

By Doris C. Dumlao

Rise in cost of basic goods still 'manageable'

WITH INFLATIONARY RISKS reported to be "manageable," the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas may go the way of the US Federal Reserve and reduce its benchmark interest rates during its next monetary setting on Nov. 15.

"The primary consideration of the BSP in assessing monetary policy stance is the inflation outlook," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said. "Thus, the Fed's decision will be considered in terms of its implications, particularly on capital flows and domestic liquidity, and their potential impact on future inflation."

The statement was made after US monetary officials last week lowered the federal funds rate, or the rate at which banks lend to each other, to 4.5 percent in an effort to ease the credit crunch brought on by a housing slump in the world's largest economy.

At present, the risks to inflation outlook appear to be manageable, based on the third quarter inflation report, the BSP said.

Also, Tetangco's reaction to the Fed move was rather subdued compared to when the Fed cut its rate by a steeper-than-expected 50 basis points in September. At that time, Tetangco was quick to say that the Fed's move gave the local central bank "room to maneuver."

The BSP then slashed its overnight borrowing rate to a 15-year low of 5.75 percent on Oct. 4.

Lower interest rates in the US usually make high-yielding assets from emerging markets like the Philippines more attractive to investors. Strong foreign inflows, in turn, threaten price stability as more money will chase consumer goods.

"Developments in the external sector, particularly major economies such as the US, are given due consideration," Tetangco said, "but the key focus remains on the inflation objective, which is the principal mandate of the BSP."

For the first nine months of the year, the country's inflation averaged at only 2.6 percent. The BSP foresees that inflation—which measures the average rise in prices of goods consumed by a typical Filipino household—will remain at the 2.6 to 3.1 percent range for the full year.

Trade with Taiwan dipped in first 8 mos

By Reena V. W. Domingo

MERCHANDISE TRADE BETWEEN THE Philippines and Taiwan declined by 3.84 percent to $4.01 billion in the eight months due to the strengthening of the peso and the slow demand for local goods in the first half.

Data from Taiwan's Government Information Office or GIO showed that Taiwan imported Philippine goods worth $1.49 billion from January to August.

This represented a 23.6-percent decline from $1.95 billion recorded in the same period last year.

On the other hand, Taiwanese shipped to the Philippines goods worth $2.51 billion, up 6.47 percent from $2.93 billion in the same period last year.

As of end-August, Taiwan maintained the upper hand with a trade surplus of about $1.61 billion, increasing by 63.32 percent from $999.6 million.

Further, the Taiwan GIO reported that the Philippines remained Taiwan's 15th largest trading partner in that period, accounting for 1.31 percent of the island-economy's total global trade, which was valued at $308.7 billion.

Among developing countries excluding mainland China, the Philippines was Taiwan's ninth largest trade partner after Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Earlier this year, the Philippines had slid a notch lower to thirteen overtook it to the fifth spot among developing countries except China.

China is Taiwan's largest trading partner with an 18.7 percent share or $75.8 billion of the latter's aggregate trade in terms of value.

Also, the Philippines was the 11th largest destination of Taiwanese exports with 2 percent of outward-bound cargoes valued at some $7.86.3 billion.

The country ranked 18th among the largest sources of Taiwan's imports—rising by two notches from 20th in the first quarter—accounting for about 1.05 percent of total inbound shipments worth some $142.2 billion.

Banana sector poised for growth, says DA

By Amy R. Raros

THE LOCAL BANANA INDUSTRY IS POISED to take advantage of the projected growth in world banana exports, estimated to reach 18 million metric tons by 2010, according to the Department of Agriculture's Strategic Plan for Bananas.

Banana exports already reached 12.94 million MT in 2004.

The DA said it believes that prospects for bananas, which has been a consistent top dollar earner, remains promising, both for the domestic and foreign markets.

Huge investment opportunities can still be seen in the exports of Cavendish and fresh and processed bananas, as well as in the production of banana chips and puree, it added.

The DA said it had mapped out strategies to ensure that the local banana industry can capture a bigger share of the export market.

In general, the DA targets to increase production and exports of banana chip and Cavendish bananas and develop more export markets.

Through its trade and selling missions and strong product promotions, the DA hopes to penetrate new markets in Europe.

At the same time, it expects to increase exports to existing markets such as Japan, China, United States, Taiwan, China, South Korea and Middle East.

Trade negotiations with Australia and New Zealand for the export of Philippine bananas will also be pursued.

Based on the DA report, the Philippines still ranks a far second from Ecuador in terms of world cut exports.

Other leading banana producers include India, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Costa Rica and Mexico.

Last year, the country's banana exports reached 1.983 million MT worth $940 million, while Ecuador exported some 6.81 million MT.

They accounts for 24 percent of the world export market while the Philippines' shares is only 16 percent, the DA said in its report.

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BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Call center agents seek recognition

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

MANFU LAMORIA, COUNTRY MANAGER of Convergys Corp. in the Philippines, gets annoyed when people say that call center agents are glorified telephone operators.

Lamoria is quick to say to anybody who utilizes that they are much more than that.

"We, agents do take calls, and they are expected to facilitate the smooth exchange of information, but their level of job complexity goes far beyond operating a manually board or handling a call," Lamoria said in a speech before the Rotary Club of Manila.

"The ability to read from a script is not good enough. Agents need to have excellent communication skills. They must possess the diction, grammar, cultural knowledge, attitude and understanding of the subtle nuances of communication to guide the customer throughout the call," she explained.

It is worth noting that most of the call center agents in the country take calls from customers from the United States who bought products and services peddled by top corporations.

As such, they demand a high level of customer service from the person on the other line, most likely somebody from the Philippines.

"Oftentimes, call center agents find themselves dealing with difficult customers with whom they must assertively negotiate in order to reach a solution that is satisfactory to both their client and their customer. No script can anticipate such situations. Confidence and presence of mind, stemming from mastery of the language, are absolutely vital," Lamoria said.

"Agents are experts in their assigned fields. To become experts, they need to absorb and retain up to six weeks' worth of training on products and concepts that may have been alien to them at the start. Then, under the close watch and high expectations of clients and customers, they are expected to apply their newly acquired knowledge flawlessly from the first call. Customer dissatisfaction is not an option," she added.

It is getting more difficult and expensive to find agents who will do the job well in the United States, which is why many customer service companies in the United States, like Convergys, have turned to the Philippines for help.

Filipinos are in the position to provide the quality customer service at a much lower price because of their facility with the

Barking up the wrong tree

ROMULO NERI'S RECENT "TOM-powers" appointment as chair of the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) is symptomatic of the terrible state in our country's system of higher education.

CHEd has in recent years been led by a procession of transitory chairs, many with dubious credentials, and few with colour and credible vision and sense of direction for the country's system of higher education.

By all indications, Neri, for all his sterling qualifications as an economist, seems to fit that same mold.

CHEd's role

His initial statements even after word of his appointment leaked out were just very reassuring. In a phone interview with this newspaper he described his role as one of "enabling" sure that college graduates are matched with the requirements of the industry."

He added that there was a need to "coordinate with our businesses, find out what they really want... to make sure that we get the curriculum relevant to the needs of the businesses."

Meeting needs

This policy objective is very much in keeping with CHEd's majority defined strategy of "meeting the immediate needs of the country."

The idea of a "strategic fit" between academic programs (supply) and industry needs (demand) has a long history.

While this concept may have been valid during the more stable periods enveloping up until the late '70s, it is no longer so under present conditions of rapid and unpredictable change in markets and production technologies.

CHED must now realize that it is not solely responsible for producing the skills and competencies that industry requires.

Rather, its role is to transmit general knowledge and knowledge that is relevant to a particular area of application or specialization.

The development of industry, firm and rank-specific skills is mainly the responsibility of employers and, to a lesser extent, of the workers themselves.

These dual problem of unpredictable demand for, and inflexible supply of, "required" human skills have to be addressed squarely by our educational planners.

Otherwise, the "mismatch" will persist and widen even more disastrously.

In today's complex and highly interconnected world of global scale production, human and organizational skills and knowledge have very short shelf lives.

Those need to be continuously changed or upgraded.

Right now, there is felt need for English-speaking employees from the BPO sector, as well as for nurses and software developers from progressive employers all over the globe.

However, no sooner have the fresh graduates with the required skills been produced, and the educational system has fully adapted to these requirements, than the needs change unexpectedly.

'Disquilibrium'

As a result, the system is perennially out of kilter (or what economists call "disequilibrium").

The system that has long been in place is unable to cope with such sudden and unexpected shifts.

The young employees are ill-equipped to readily adapt to changing circumstances by upgrading their skills and competencies.

Neither can the educational institutions adapt by investing in the needed resources to produce relevant skills requirements.

What we do have is a potentially huge inventory of workers with unemployable skills and educational systems that is equally locked into dated curricula and academic programs.

High switching costs make it extremely difficult to effectively adapt to new and continuously evolving circumstances.

Given life in the context of the ever-dynamic conditions, a "match" between supply and demand is pure fantasy.

This article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the organizations/Association of the Philippines. He is the author of the book "ZERO BUT ABOVE Behind Why Today's Business Models Fail to Deliver." Feedback at rogue@globetrot.com.ph.)

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Global chemical firm cites projects ...

From page B1-1

"base" and smaller ones.

"This is very important to helping improve the incomes of farmers," he added.

Crop protection

DuPont's second facility—its crop protection unit—is done in Abadilla's heart because he started out in the company as part of this division.

"This is where DuPont started in the Philippines," he said, explaining that the pesticides unit started out in Cabuyao, Laguna 35 years ago but decided to relocate to the Carmelray Industrial Park once its old site became surrounded by residential developments.

Track record

"We were very concerned about the residents around the facility," he said, refusing a corporate philosophy of environmental prevention that makes DuPont stand out from among companies involved in industrial chemicals.

The last pesticide industry is worth at least P5 billion and DuPont seeks relatively less in the field, but Abadilla takes pride in the track record of the facility.

"We have been operating this facility for over 26 years without a single 'lost work' case," he said.

This means that not a single accident resulting in death or injury has occurred at the site...an enviable record for any company.

Training facility

Finally, the company also operates a training facility which travels to clients on the proper use of its paint products, used mainly in the automobile industry.

"Our training center teaches the most advanced methods for painting in the auto industry," Abadilla said.

Throughout all this, the DuPont country chief pointed out that contrary to the environment, has remained the company's overriding concern.

He explains that many of DuPont's products are "dangerous" when disposed of improperly so the company has a "cradle to grave" policy for their items till exercise proper handling till the may in proper disposal, especially of industrial and agricultural chemicals.

The company's devotion to environmental concerns is, to say the least, unusual.

"It's been built in our corporate philosophy," Abadilla said. "We want to take sustainability to the next level."

For a company founded on the chemical industry, it is in a real sense walking the talk.

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Call center agents ...

From page B1-1

MARIE Zamora

English language and affinity with the American culture.

This explains the exponential growth of the call center industry in the Philippines, which is unfortunately not fully appreciated, according to Simon.

Aside from the misconception that agents are glorified telephone operators, there also seems to be lack of appreciation of the opportunities that the call center industry offers not only to its employees but also the country at large," she said.

Convergys figures showed that the call center industry in the Philippines brought in $3.5 billion in revenues and has provided jobs to many young Filipinos ranging from 21 to 26 years old.

And the industry can grow faster, if only there are enough agents to meet the demand.

For while Filipinos are familiar with the language and the culture, not all can pass the high standards required by the call center companies.

"The potential for employment and growth in this industry is limited not by demand but the talent pool that has been honed to perfection in the English language. The current pass rate is five out of every 100 applicants. Imagine if the pass rate were 10, 20 or even 30 percent? It is easy to imagine the economic benefits our country can realize from increased revenues in this one industry," she said.

Data shows that if the call center industry sustains its growth of 21 percent, the industry will double by 2010 from 2006 with 240,000 new jobs created. At an accelerated growth of 33 percent a year, the industry can generate up to 500,000 jobs.

Convergys itself has 11,000 employees located across eight centers nationwide with a new one to be set up in Bacolod City next year.

"There is more than enough business for Philippine call centers to double or even triple their revenue. If we were to accomplish this, we would see more stores, food outlets, merchandise sales and numerous economic benefits brought about by a highly paid, painfully employed, assertive youth," she said.

Chri Hrek, Convergys president for customer care, told the business during his recent visit to the country that the Philippine operations, which grew from zero in 2000 to 11,000 today, have been very profitable and "have exceeded Convergys's expectations."

As such, Hrek was optimistic that the Convergys business in the country will grow even further, as long as it is able to develop middle and senior management.

"We can get middle and senior management from outside the company. But we have a very strong preference to develop our talent internally and give our call center agents opportunities for growth," Hrek said.

He said demand for call center services would continue to grow because only 20 percent of operations in the United States that can be outsourced are actually being outsourced to other countries.

This means a huge potential market still waiting to be tapped, and the Philippines is in a position to take advantage. The key to the availability of a talent pool proficient in the English language.

"We are aiming to hit a mail values it either is available talent over here," Hrek said, and this has spurred Convergys to partner with the Department of Education in the development of a teacher training program delivered by Convergys trainers.

Under the program, Convergys trainers volunteer their time to share best practices in teaching English with public school teachers to help them help their students become experts in the English language.

Over 930 teacher mentors have participated in the program and the training is starting to have a ripple effect among the teachers' peers and students.

Hrek was confident that as students from the value of learning English well and consider a career in the call center industry, the customer care industry in the Philippines will continue to grow at its current fast pace.

Benguet town drops Switzerland brand

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

KIBUNGAN, BENGUET—LOCAL OFFICIALS no longer want this municipality to be known as the "Switzerland of Benguet" after conceding that the tag does not really describe the town.

The town council recently passed a resolution prohibiting all government agencies, private organizations and individuals from using the tag.

It promotes Kibungan as an ecotourist destination.

Mayor Benito Siadto said the officials decided to drop the tag following the objections raised by the Department of Tourism on grounds that the line did not give an accurate picture of what Kibungan really looks like.

Controversy

The DOT raised its objection after the Department of Trade lodged a complaint on investment brochures describing the town as the "Switzerland of Benguet" and "a cool place of rocky mountains and pine trees resembling that of Switzerland."

Purificacion Molintas, DOT Cordillera director, earlier said the tag was misleading since Kibungan's features were far from being similar to Switzerland's.

She said the Christ- is promotes Benguet's convention and investment potentials must come from the proper branding of its 13 towns.

> Town officials say Kibungan is not really 'Switzerland of Benguet'

Wrong impression

In the case of Kibungan, Molintas said the Swiss tag creates the wrong impression that the town has mountains full of snow where skiing enthusiasts could come and play.

Siadto said, however, that town officials have considered changing the town's tag even before the controversy over the DOT's investment brochure surfaced.

"We never objected to the removal of our tag," he said.

Siadto said people must understand why the town was tagged as the "Switzerland of Benguet."

Cool weather

"It is the town's cool weather and temperature that prompted thoughts of calling the town as the 'Switzerland of Benguet,'" Siadto said.

"The town is dominantly mountainous. It enjoys a cool highland climate," he said. "The association then with Switzerland was done in good faith."

Kibungan, which is 62 km north of Baguio City, is known for its forests, potatoes and cabbages.

It has a population of 15,656 and a land area of 19,210 hectares.

The temperature here drops from December to January.

Madaptem, one of its eight villages, often experiences frost, locally called "tamlag," that destroys vegetable farms.

To do away with the tag problem, Siadto said that a resource will be held to come up with a new and more appropriate one.

He said the entries, which should be accompanied by a one-paragraph explanation, should be submitted from Nov. 1 to 15 to the town's planning and development office.

The winner will be announced on Nov. 22, during the culmination of the town's weeklong foundation day festivities and a day after its regular (traditional wine) festival.

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Global chemical firm cites projects focusing on the local environment

By Dante L. Luna

THE NAME DUPONT REMAINS UNFAMILIAR to many Filipinos, but a cellular phone contains up to 14 of the company's products that help make the handheld device smaller, lighter and more reliable.

With almost every Filipino sending an average of seven text messages a day, DuPont is an integral part of a Filipino's everyday activities, whether they realize it or not.

In the Philippines, however, DuPont's actual operations are of a different kind.

The multinational company known for its the manufacturing of Teflon coating came to the country in 1973, as DuPont Far East Inc. Philippines.

Its core markets include agriculture and nutrition, building specialties, automotive, food, beverage and packaging, industrial chemicals and electronics.

DuPont has three owned operating plants in the Philippines: A crop protection plant in Carmelray Laguna, the Pioneer corn seed plant in South Cotabato, and a performance coatings office and training center, which supports the local training program for its customers.

"We are a diverse company, but in this country, we have three operations, two of which are in agriculture," DuPont Philippines country managing director Rainier Abadilla said in an interview.

He pointed to the company's Pioneer corn seed plant, which produces the seeds used by corn farmers to cultivate this economically important crop.

"In corn seed, we are number one in market share," he said.

Abadilla estimates that the local market for corn seed is worth about P1.3 billion.

Although the total production of DuPont's facility is small compared to the national requirement, he said that this remained significant because of the quality of the corn that grow from the company's corn seed.

"Our corn seeds are selling very well [because] it has one of the highest yield rates," he said, explaining that the corn seed from DuPont's local facility produces larger

B-2004, 10-1

DUPONT officials during the firm's 7th annual tree planting activity. Carrying the environment cudgel high are the firm's list of corporate priorities.

"We want to take sustainability to the next level," says DuPont's Abadilla

BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quiniquin-Espino

FLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan

Views on RP economy are a-changing

By Manuel V. Pangilinan
Chair, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

THERE HAS BEEN A SEA CHANGE IN the perception about the Philippine economy—with renewed interest in infrastructure, real estate, mining, tourism and power.

This has happened in just 12 months.

Major fiscal adjustments made by the government in 2005 and 2006, abetted by abundant global liquidity, have been the two critical factors which have reversed investment sentiments on the Philippines.

This more confident outlook has indeed led to higher investment inflows recently.

FDI data in the past two years have been particularly strong.

In 2005, the Philippines approved a total of $1.7 billion in foreign direct investments. In 2006, this figure nearly doubled, reaching $3.2 billion in approved FDIs—the highest level recorded in the past seven years.

But how big are we really on the investment radar screen?

Even on the account of aggregate FDI's received in 2006 by the six major Asean countries—Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines—we accounted for only an average of 3 to 4 percent of such consolidated FDIs since 2003.

Challenge ahead

We barely led Indonesia, which landed last in rank. And in comparison, Vietnam attracted 12 percent of the total FDIs of these six countries, a 300-percent rise from its 4-percent share it had in 2003.

That said, the opportunity to enhance our investment attractiveness is clearly at hand; new due prospects for, and perception of, the Philippine economy are the strongest as they have been in recent memory.

Which economic model should the Philippines adopt then to lift its growth rate, and make it globally competitive?

The answers to these questions points to offshore remittances and the outsourcing business being the most important features of our economy.

VIEWS B3-1

THE MANILA DOCTORS HOSPITAL: TAKING LEAPS AND BOUNDS

When the Manila Doctors Hospital was established 50 years ago, its founders envisioned it to become a tertiary hospital that is uniquely attuned to the needs of Filipinos from all walks of life.

Over the years, the Manila Doctors Hospital has realized that vision.

It continuously upgrades and expands by investing the expertise of its current pool of medical professionals and developing new centers of health care.

It carries a prominence many with its wide range of specializations. Today, Filipinos know Manila Doctors Hospital as a complete medical institution what with the efficient department-by-specialties.

These include Internal Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, ENT, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Ophthalmology, Orthopedics, Anesthesia, Rehabilitation Medicine, Psychology, Nuclear Medicine, Family Medicine, Dental Medicine and Pathology.

The Manila Doctors Hospital likewise encompass specialized medical service units as they saw the need to grow further, such as the Intensive Care Unit, its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Hemodialysis Unit, Primary Stroke Center, Laparoscopy Unit, Nuclear Medicine Unit and its Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

New Horizons

Now, many Filipinos trust the hospital more than ever and one of the initial obvious locations for their wellness.

But the Manila Doctors Hospital is setting its sights on far greater horizons.

The first hospital to embark on vision and Certification has invested an enormous amount of effort to further upgrade its services and expand its medical specialties.

It has added new centers of wellness and health care that address specific health concerns.

Housed within its newly built Doctor Consultancy Building are specialty clinics such as the Aesthetics Center, Child Neurosciences Center, Geriatrics Multidisciplinary Center, Pain Management and Wellness Center and PHILHEALTH Education and Research Center.

It also now has an Allied Services Building that carries as the home of the Industrial Medicine Services Department.

A Team of Outstanding Doctors

Above all these developments, the institution takes pride in having some of the best medical specialists within its quarters. Its medical professionals of more than 300 active and 100 courtesy members on board the medical and dental departments is some of the best the country has.

All of the institution's physicians are fellows, diplomates or have earned both participations from their respective fields of specialization. Many of them sought training overseas as others are affiliated with the UP-Philippine General Hospital and other center institutions.

Many of these professionals have been recognized here and abroad for their contribution to the greater spectrum of the medical field.

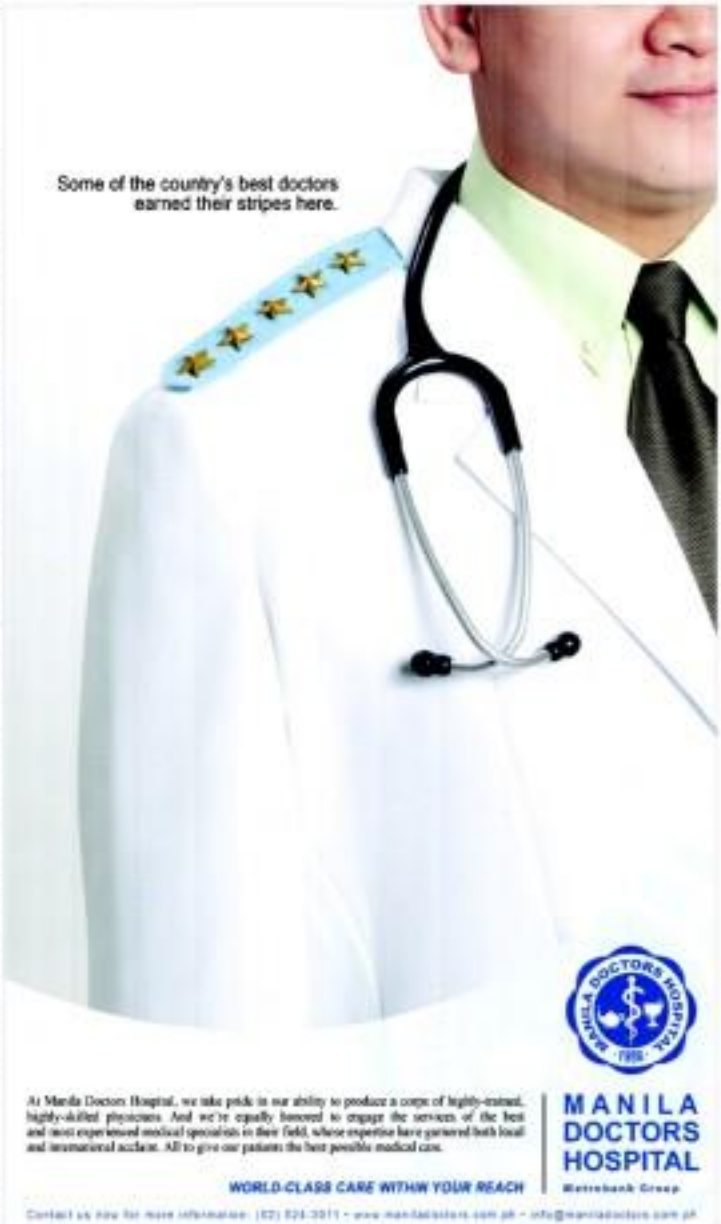
In fact, a handful of them were recently honored and awards.

Most notable among these awardees are Dr. Clemente Arbanto who was awarded as the Most Distinguished Physician of the Year 2006 by the Philippine College of Physicians, Dr. Fernando Poblete who was given the Centenary Award by the Polish Society of Internal Medicine and Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society, Dr. Alexander Batiga who was given the 10th Dr. Jose P. Rizal Memorial Award for Academic & Research by the Philippine Medical Association, Dr. Antonio Ojeda who was chosen as the Outstanding Professional of the Year 2007 for Medicine by the Professional Regulations Commission and Dr. Augusto O. Litonjua who was awarded the Outstanding Service Award for Promotion of the Endocrine Health of Underserved by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.

Keeping its Commitment

At this point in its history, the Manila Doctors Hospital stands tall and proud with its many accomplishments. It is poised to continue even further.

But it there's one other reason why Filipinos can continue to trust and rely on the Manila Doctors Hospital, it's that they will continue to offer world-class care without reservation.



At Manila Doctors Hospital, we take pride in our ability to produce a corps of highly-trained, highly-skilled physicians. And we're equally honored to engage the services of the best and most experienced medical specialists in their field, whose expertise have garnered both local and international acclaim. All to give our patients the best possible medical care.

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Albay's geothermal energy answer to power crisis

Underutilized resource deserves gov't attention

By Ephraim Aguilar and Nilo Cacdac Calleja
Tiwi, Albay

A HUGE AMOUNT OF STEAM GUSHING from the geothermal operations in this town, northeast of Legazpi City, is not being maximized by the government, said Arthur Yap, asset affairs supervisor of Chevron Geothermal Philippines Holdings Inc.

Yap said geothermal energy has great potential in solving the power crisis now gripping the country since it is less expensive than coal and bunker.

He said the dry spell in Luzon should prompt authorities to immediately focus on other energy resources, particularly geothermal.

Unlike other energy resources, geothermal projects no logistical concerns, like transportation, Yap said.

And when the government taps geothermal energy, it can expect to save as much as $1 billion in foreign exchange, he added.

Underused

"In Tiwi, only 64 megawatts out of the 150 megawatts produced by the geothermal plant were being used by NPC during off-peak hours, and 100 percent on peak hours," said Yap.

He added that they had been urging the government to consider good but find a primary source of energy, and maximize its use in the country.

On the average, only 8 percent of the energy used by the country come from geothermal; 15 percent from water; and 22 percent from natural gases.

Fossil fuel accounted for the bulk of 55 percent.

Supplying 20 percent of power in the Luzon grid, geothermal operations in Tiwi marked a first in the country. Tiwi has become one of the largest producers of geothermal power in the world.

Service provider

Chevron operates the Tiwi geothermal facilities on a 1,800-hectare property. The American company is a service provider to the government-owned National Power Corp. (NPC).

Chevron supplies steam generated by underground heat to the NPC, which converts it to electricity.

The American firm manages two out of seven geothermal plants in the country.

Advantages

Despite a huge capacity to generating clean, renewable, and affordable energy, geothermal plants could not be considered the main sources of power in the country, Baria said.

As of 2006, geothermal comprises only 8 percent of the country's power mix.

Chevron maintains that geothermal is the cleanest energy form after hydroelectric.

It is also environment friendly since it does not use nonrenewable fossil fuels that produce harmful emissions.

And, unlike coal, oil, and hydroelectric, geothermal energy emits around 80 percent less greenhouse gases, such as sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide.

Challenges

According to the Department of Energy, technical uncertainties and the lack of private sector investments are hampering geothermal projects in the country.

"The development of promising geothermal areas had been impossible to set aside pending verbose legislated breakthroughs in handling arable wells," the DOE stated in its website.

The passage of laws on environment preservation, such as the "National Integrated Protected Areas System Act," and empowerment of cultural communities, like the "Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997," also posed constraints, the website added.

The DOE said the laws affect geothermal ventures, which entail additional costs.

Exploration of the geothermal area in Tiwi started in 1972. A year after, the Nagiubong well was discovered. At present, there are 39 production wells and 21 injection wells at the site.

Tiwi geothermal, which started commercial operations in Jan. 31, 1979, has an installed capacity of 260 megawatts and available capacity of 234 megawatts as of July 2007.

Its cumulative gross generation as of December 2005 was 40,366 gigawatt-hours.

Views on RP economy are a-changing

The developing OFW market and the other side of the same economic coin, the outsourcing business, have created a separate yet significant sub-sector, which has been called an "exclave economy"—one whose links to the mother economy become more tenuous as it grows in size and definition (Table 6).

Exclave economy

This exclave economy may, in fact, become both a blessing and a potential threat. Why is this so? Because there are two reasons for the following projections.

First, exclave remittances finance domestic consumption. Consumption thereby rises and becomes an increasingly dominant factor of our economic growth.

Second, inward flows provide an upward bias to our currency. Typically, a strong currency depletes manufacturing and export competitiveness, causing investment to, and output by, firms moves to workers.

Third, where or large demands are made on the production sector, no significant investments will be made into it. Perhaps this partly explains the recent unused record of domestic investments.

This process explains the emergence of what some UP economics professors have labeled the "Show Mo" or "SM-monomy"—advancing consumption, retail and wholesale trade, and real estate, on the one hand; and increasingly lukewarm manufacturing and investments, on the other.

Paradoxically, the flows of forex spawned by out-migration and our outsourcing businesses have caused a peso appreciation that undermines their very purpose.

It is estimated that since 2004, a lower peso has cost the overseas workers and their families more than P166 billion in purchasing power.

It has also impacted adversely the purchased certain key businesses.

As to when the current remittance-driven economic will continue is a difficult proposition to make. The only certainty is that the 10-12 percent remittance growth every year cannot last indefinitely because the domestic economy will suffer in the long run from its adverse side effects.

At some point, the forces for a closure complete can result in a situation where the increasing exodus of workers creates only as many jobs and incomes abroad as it destroys at home, leaving the economy unemployed or even worse off.

In the ultimate analysis, despite the personal hardship these pain phenomena might bring, they have been marvelous success stories, worthy of national pride and respect.

Way forward

Let me now turn to the question—how can we achieve growth and enhance its impact? The answer may involve five sets of variables:

1. Investment in education

The first crucial variable is education. The crisis in education is public knowledge, and its issues are complex. Let me just recognize that relevant education is critical to maintain the momentum of our exodus and domestic industries.

2. Investments in natural and human resources

Beyond education, a number of domestic industries possess reasonably good prospects. What are these?

First, businesses which offer unique locational or resource advantages. In this regard, tourism and mining provide us with competitive benefits over other countries. These opportunities simply reflect the reserve in terms of natural resources in the global economy.

Second, businesses that are derivatives by-products of the skills exodus. Medical tourism and the retirement businesses are cases in point. The production of nurses and caregivers would inevitably give rise to a surplus, of which our focus be multiplied for the tourism and retirement industries.

Third, businesses linked to information and communications technology. The remarkable growth in the scale and scope of the BPO is testimony to this fact. Sadly however, compared to our personnel potential in ICT, current efforts remain meager.

3. Investment in infrastructure

As to infrastructure, the country has been a perennial laggard in league tables, ranking 81st among 91 countries in terms of quality infrastructure, according to the world competitiveness rankings of 2006.

Investment spending in infrastructure would raise the demand for imports and dollars, thereby draining the pressure on peso appreciation.

Moreover, it would lower the cost of domestic production, providing an added incentive for investors to locate domestically and promote home employment.

To get most out of the limited resources devoted to infrastructure, both the government and the private sector should localities, divert and focus their infrastructure spending at three strategic locations that will help "reinforce" aggregate economic activity.

4. The peace and agriculture

Notwithstanding the strategic importance of agriculture to our economy is has historically been accorded step-child attention. The agricultural sector, broadly defined, accounts for about 1/3 of the labor force and 20 percent of GDP. More important, 70 percent of our poor live in rural areas.

Developing agriculture

A stagnant agricultural sector worsens rural poverty, and constitutes a second limit of the economy by limiting massive migration to the cities.

A domestic contract workers—or DCW—sub-economy has therefore emerged, creating a significant flow of domestic remittances from workers in cities to their families in the provinces.

Ironically, agricultural reform would feed our people, and stem rising rural poverty.

Finally, the poor performance of Philippine agriculture can be traced to weaknesses in government policies, and the distortions and inefficiencies caused by excessive government intervention in the markets.

As well, our laws affecting agriculture and development are not investor-friendly.

Our Constitution limits foreign ownership of land, while the comprehensive agrarian reform program or CARP restricts the size of landholdings and stifles the development of a land market by making transfers of title illegal.

Both these policies militate against capital-intensive farming, which requires significant economies of scale, large investments, and long gestation.

Commercial farming

To revive commercial farming, we must revisit Section 27 of the CARP law, and amend it to allow landholders to sell or otherwise dispose of their landholdings previously to allow consolidation of land and achieve economies of scale.

This will require a change in attitude as well—away from the romantic notion that the tiller must be the landowner, or that producer-cooperatives are the only viable form of large-scale agriculture.

5. Peso appreciation

I'm glad to note that the government has taken the first steps to prevent any further unwarranted rise in the peso.

Indeed, the situation has reached the point of national urgency that conditions of overseas workers and exporters have already breached the idea of dual exchange rates—not a good idea.

The government has started to shift its borrowing and repayment mix by paying down foreign debt through domestic borrowing. This has to be accelerated.

In addition, it would be recommendable to invite for the government to consider forex caps to ensure a soft landing for the peso, by allowing it to rise or managed, if not at predictable, fashion.

A guided predictability will allow businesses to plan and operate better.

Apart from dealing with the new problem of an appreciating peso, the government may have some difficulty closing the national budget gap by 2009, without the help of one-time privatization proceeds. Like corporations, I believe the market and international credit rating agencies gauge performance based on recurring revenues of revenues, profits, and cash, and less on exceptionals such as privatization receipts.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by saying that while the five critical variables I've identified are important in keeping us on the radar screen of global investors, and making us globally competitive, success will come only from quality executives by quality people.

We should take heart from a report recently made by the French Investment Bank—Credit Lyonnaise or CLSA—"the next generation Filipino is evolving" as many experts—from the changing character of Philippine politicians, to the deepening talent pool of managers in the corporate sector, and finally to the developing Filipino worker—local and overseas. We expect the global Filipino to emerge in the next 10 years. The country likewise has a solid fundamental foundation. The tipping point will take place in the next five to 10 years."

(This is an abridged version of the keynote address delivered by the author during the 33rd Philippine Business Conference and Expo. Title: "One Global Filipino Through Public-Private Partnership")

Sablan shares troubles of a 5th-class municipality

Benguet's fruit basket turning to real estate industry for help in its economic growth

By Delmar Cariño
Regional Northern Luzon

SABLAN, BENGUET—THIS TOWN IS known as Benguet's fruit basket and a bedridge paradise between Baguio City's cool climate and La Union's warm weather ideal for swimming and nature trekking.

But trade and local officials said despite the branding, investments are still scarce.

They lamented that most tourists and visitors just pass through the town on their way to the city or the lowlands.

The town has an annual income of only P26 million and officials are desperately looking for ways to improve on its 5th-class classification.

Looking for investors

Their challenge is to place Sablan (area: 9,500 hectares; pop: 9,000) on the business map.

"We ask investors to explore Sablan," Mayor Gumbaric Tarto said.

Officials are pushing Sablan to become the "southernmost basin for subsistence production" and as a strategic site for a casino and ecovillage.

They wanted Sablan to be transformed from a low key agriculture economy to a bustling industrial haven.

Aside from banana and pineapple, Sablan's farmers are also dependent on cabbages, cauliflower, jackfruit, olive, lychee, guyabano, guava, cucumber, papaya, mangosteen, durian, santol and ilgas grass for their livelihood.

A Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) consumer brochure said Sablan's pineapple, banana and jackfruit are ideal for juice extraction.

It was hoped that these agreements would bring in the technology needed for the mass production of processed fruit products.

Soft broom

Sablan also sees growth potential in its walis tambo (soft broom) industry.

"Sablan is the largest commercial producer of soft broom and baskets due to the availability of tiger grass and bamboo in the town," the brochure said.

The town's bodily needed this sales pitch.

After all, it was once the province's banana and pineapple capital but a deadly virus, called "bunchy top," swept its plantations five years ago and wreaked havoc on Sablan's economy.

Only the cigar grounds remained to devote hundreds of hectares.

"Our production dropped. Wholesalers in Baguio City felt the pinch when their supplies failed to arrive," Estrovald.

Sablan can still revive their banana industry, but the farmers cannot afford to wait.

Councilor Hermenegilde Omo, chair of the council committee on agriculture, said the town's farmers were not ready to stop planting for 10 years as recommended by University of the Philippines Baguio and Benguet State University experts so that the soil can recover from the effects of the virus.

Omo said the BSU developed a new strain for banana to replace the damaged varieties but the farmers found out that the infant were only good for one cropping.

Some was Sablan's pride in its banana, particularly the lakatan variety.

There are still bananas but those are not as robust and as many as before.

More than half of the town's agricultural land used to be devoted to banana and pineapple.

Today, only close to a fourth of the original area remains planted to banana and pineapples.

The town, however, is still pinning its hope on its fruits.

Officials had considered passing a measure to consider tube (yam) as the official entry in the One Town One Product (OTOP) program of the Department of Trade and Industry.

The plan was scrapped, however, when officials found out that Sablan's tube was losing out to the competition in the market.

Now, town officials want something new—explore the town's real estate potentials.

Five companies have already acquired property in for developed into subdivisions.

The town council also passed a resolution as early as 2005 requesting the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) to consider the town as a possible location of a casino.

But Pagcor snubbed Sablan's request saying that the town has no hotels that could host tourists and the casino.

"Anytime Pagcor wants to come, they are still welcome," Tarto said.

Tarto said a casino, a cockpit and a hotel could neighbor many tourists here and help them get over the problem with the bunchy top virus.

"But we are not abandoning agriculture," he said.

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BUSINESS Monday

Call centers even for small businesses

By Desire L. Lucas

CALL CENTERS ARE ALL THE RAGE FOR large companies that want to maximize their opportunities while reducing costs by outsourcing some of their operations to external service providers.

But what about smaller companies that want to take advantage of the outsourcing trend?

For the most part, outsourcing has remained prohibitive and daunting to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), many of which are unable to realize greater operational efficiencies because most business process outsourcing (BPO) firms continue to focus on big-ticket corporations.

Enter eTEXT and its Unified Contact Center Plus... a pre-integrated suite of contact ctr...

CALL CENTERS B2-1

EVEN small and medium-scale firms need call centers.

ANOTHER BIG STATEMENT FROM SM

The world finally meets at SMX CONVENTION CENTER

No other convention corner in the country comes close to the experience and size of this world-class convention and exhibition center

"BIG IS THE BIGGEST" IS ALWAYS A COMfortable association with the Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) in Pasay City. But there's no doubt that SM Mall of Asia (MOA) is currently biggest mall around the corner and Mile Hi called inside MOA booths of the biggest cinema screen and expectancy (the endless universe of world).

And now comes SMX Convention Center, which undoubtedly is the biggest convention and exhibition structure ever built in this country. With floor area of more than 46,000 square meters and standing three stories high, SMX is an imposing monolith of steel and glass structure inside Mall of Asia Complex, the 60-hectare one-stop, self-contained community project by the SM Investments Corporation.

SMX is a private sector initiated project that aims to promote the country as a destination for international conventions and exhibitions. With SMX now being an integral part of the whole Mall of Asia Complex, the ambitious development on the coast of Manila Bay has now become a definitive showcase of the country's appeal as a regional hub for tourism and business conferences.

According to Desiree Dayrit, the Senior Assistant Vice-President of SMX, the Philippines has a lot to offer in the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions because now it has world-class business facilities like the SMX. The country also has a globally-oriented society, a predominantly English-speaking population, and hospitable and friendly people that make this country suitable to hold international conventions.

"For a very long time people have been waiting for a big, new and a world-class venue for exhibitions and conventions to be established. And now SMX has finally arrived," says Dayrit. "And it's ready to put the country in the world map of preferred destination for conventions."

SMX facility consists of open exhibition areas, multi-functional halls and flexible function rooms suitable for large-scale trade events, major medical and other industry conventions and corporate functions imaginable. It offers facilities for all kinds of events—from tradefairs, interactive consumer shows, exposition, concerts to exhibits and receptions. Its logistical and personal support offers is at par with the best in the world.

With floor area of more than 46,000 square meters, SMX undoubtedly is the biggest convention and exhibition structure in the country.

Exhibit Halls occupy a total floor space of 15,000 square meters

Director Dayrit

The ground floor lobby can also be used as exhibit area or for pre-function purposes.

Rooms for screening

For conventions, meetings, and any event for that matter

Located on the third floor is the Convention Center, whose rooms and floor levels can be adjusted to suit the needs and capacity of any type of event, from a small board meeting, large convention, to a grand banquet, cultural show or concert.

The five function rooms can be combined so that the area can seat anywhere from 500 to 4,100 guests. The ten meeting rooms can also be combined to accommodate small meetings of 10 people to 200 people for a seminar function; the theater room is particularly configured for special functions that require elevated seating arrangements.

Anticipating the exhibitor's needs always

SMX has partnered with a number of respected companies like hotels, caterers, audio-visual equipment and service providers, freight forwarders, exhibit and booth suppliers to provide exhibitors and convention people a worry-free arrangement of their events. SMX's services include professionals and experts in the field to ensure clients of success with their events.

SMX can cater to events of any size giving clients the finest service and facilities such as dedicated convention managers and staff for each function, catering and banquet services, dedicated kitchen per function room, concierge service, onsite parking for 4000 vehicles, client services like business center, VIP lounge, the Internet and telecommunication facilities, security, cleaning and tech support services, and events management services as well.

SMX has already attracted a number of events topping these coming days, like the Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers' Convention and Exhibit, COMDEX Fall Expo, Trade Show International's Manila Auto Salon and the Art-Expo International Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and a number of Corporate Christmas Parties.

"We've been very successful with Megaworld Hall," says Dayrit. "But we are really baffled and bogged with the concept by establishing SMX within the Mall of Asia Complex that will locate the future hotels and office arena—to fully support the vision of SM to make this country's a regional hub for business, pleasure, tourism and entertainment."

SMX is strategically located inside the Mall of Asia Complex, just minutes away from the international airport.

For exhibitions, expositions, and trade shows

On the ground floor are the Exhibit Halls occupying total floor space of 15,000 square meters, with nine-meter high ceiling space allowing for flexibility in installing multi-level booth interiors. Halls can be combined to make bigger spaces to accommodate various equipment and machineries. The exhibit area floors can accommodate loads of up to 250 lbs per square foot.

Exhibit areas are provided with standby power supply, Wi-Fi connectivity, telephone lines, water supply, service access elevators and elevators, the ground floor lobby can also be used as exhibit area or for pre-function purposes.

As a point of advantage and benefit for clients, SMX offers concierge service to assist guests with information for hotel booking and flight confirmation, parking as well as entrance reservations.

POWERSHOT A630 IS

POWERSHOT G9 (below) and CANON SD1000 (left)

There's power to go with the style

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT IS JUST 50 DAYS BEFORE Christmas, and many Filipinos are getting ready to buy something grand for themselves or their loved ones as soon as that bonus gets in.

Canon Marketing (Philippines) Inc. hopes that, when they do, they will choose among its new PowerShot, Digital Ixus and iSmile DV models, which it launched just in time for the holidays.

Canon presidents and CEO Ramon C. Isberto said due to...

CANON IXUS 9

...sizes, large views, new LCD and a manual mode dial. It is also compatible with wide angle and telephoto lenses and has an accessory holder with possible add-ons.

For those who are looking for style as well as performance, Canon offers the Digital Ixus 800IS (PHP19,990) and 900IS (PHP25,990).

The 800IS is power-packed with a resolution of eight megapixels, 28mm wide-angle shooting and three-inch LCD.

The 900IS, on the other hand, is renowned as pure elegance and is the new flagship model of the Ixus line. It has a resolution of 10.1 megapixels and a...

...being of digital photography—found at the optical image stabilizer, which reduces blurring due to camera shake, and extended zoom of up to 10 times.

The PowerShot cameras also have Canon's new select and track feature capable of detecting up to 35 faces in a frame and shooting modes ranging from fully automatic to fully manual.

The top of the line is the PowerShot G9, which many professional photographers consider the best compact in the line. Canon EOS single lens reflex cameras, like the new Canon 40D.

The G9 is follows up to the popular G7, has a resolution of 12.1 megapixels, 6x optical zoom, large 2.5-inch LCD and a manual mode dial. It is also compatible with wide angle and telephoto lenses and has an accessory holder with possible add-ons.

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...compact 4x optical zoom lens.

Isberto feared that sensors worldwide buy the time his brother became of the style. "Para like the style and the performance," Isberto said.

Aside from the cameras, Isberto said Canon was also optimistic about the prospects of its HD2H AHD30 Camcorder (PHP74,990), its first foray into the hard disk drive digital video camera and reputed to be the smallest in the market.

Like the PowerShot, the Camcorder also has image stabilization feature that removes camera shake during hand held filming and a high resolution image processor that is good for high-definition video requirements.

It can store up to 40GB of video or up to 12 hours of continuous recording, and can double as a digital camera because it can take still photos directly from the video footage.

Artefacto said that, with the launch of the new models, he was confident that Canon would continue to pull away from its competitors and cement its position as the number one brand, according to research firm GfK Asia.

"With the season competitor lagging by a far 9 percentage points behind, Canon is poised to dominate the charts once again this year," Artefacto added.

POWERSHOT A720 IS

Wireless devices with eye-candy appeal

By Raquel P. Gomez

MOST WIRELESS DEVICES IN THE market today aren't visually appealing to consumers.

This is why Taiwan-based network solutions developer Alpha Networks set foot in the sort.

Unlike the others, it came out with attractive designs for its wireless devices—such as sleek sloping white pedestal architecture, antennas poking from the devices and a spherical antenna solution stand that looks like it came straight out of a sci-fi film.

Boasting eye-candy appeal like iPods, these products feature the 2.4 GHz IEEE802.11n Draft 2.0 wireless standard, which is now becoming the standard for all next-generation wireless devices.

The IEEE802.11n Draft 2.0 is capable of 300 Mbps (megabits per second) data transfer rate that is six times faster than the current standard.

Alphan AWRM wireless wide router with the WLAN Extender Mimo 802.11n Draft 2.0 broadband router, a sleek white device with three finger-like detachable antennas. The device can be used in tandem with the Alphan 802.11n/MIMO antenna adapter stand that looks like a satellite straight out of a sci-fi film.

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which can be installed in the PCI expansion slot of a desktop. For notebooks, the HR7708 Pc ultdan Wireless 802.11n Draft 2.0 32-bit card has to be used.

There is also the HR7714Ah ultpa Wireless 802.11n Draft 2.0 USB adapter which can be attached to a USB slot.

Hunter Chen, Alphan sales director, said the new housing design and look of Alphan products was in line with the company's efforts to bring its products within reach of consumers.

Chen says Alphan products are reasonably priced compared with other popular wireless products in the market like D-Link, Linksys and Netgear.

What will a Wi-Fi junkie do with the Alphan series to propagate the culture and lifestyle of the wireless world?

Why, surf on it then.

The products prove to be very functional at home and its business.

An example is a company can structure its network of computing devices wirelessly at a lower cost.

With the new 802.11n Draft 2.0 standard, Alphan devices can easily transmit large data sure the air, including video presentations.

Think about it, one video presentation coming from one PC source being streamed to several LCD monitors or projectors at several meeting rooms.

As to your Wi-Fi hotspot being hacked by...

...system today need—given the high capital expenditure involved and the complexity of installation and maintenance."

ePLDT's Unified Contact Center Plus aims to address these multi-function and multi-process requirements. This new service is powered by Customcentr's Contact Center On-Demand technology. Customcentr, a global leader in unified customer communications, is also the leading provider of Contact Center On-Demand technology worldwide.

As telecommunication companies provide more messaging services and move to more web-based customer self-service, it has become increasingly important for businesses to transform their old center into one that supports every customer channel in a unified way.

Given the latest trend in customers customer toward offshore outsourcing of agents, a virtual call center solution like Unified Contact Center Plus can also help companies make this move without compromising the level of service and disturbing the integrity of the applications.

"With Unified Contact Center Plus, organizations enjoy speedy implementation and streamlined operations as well as reduced cost of integration, management and maintenance. It also allows companies to focus on their core business while enjoying expanded functionality in their contact center," Espinosa said in his statement.

Unified Contact Center Plus is now being used by organizations from a range of industries with a need for efficient customer management services, such as the tourism and finance sectors, telecommunications companies and retail and manufacturing industries.

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December 2007 Course Offerings

JOSIAH GO'S

STRATEGIC MARKETING: ANALYZING INDUSTRY AND OPPORTUNITIES

DECEMBER 6, 2007 (8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.)
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Formulating marketing strategy must be aligned and coherent with corporate strategy. Learn the language of top management in evaluating and redirecting industry's profitability and in spotting opportunities.

OTHER SEMINARS:

2ND CLIENT-CENTRIC SELLING BY ROMEO UNTIVEROS (DEC. 4-5, 2007)
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3RD MARKETING AND SALES IMPLEMENTATION BY JOSIAH GO (DEC. 6-7, 2007)
Business plans are useless and boring unless translating your marketing strategy to life. In case I don't, learn some ideas you would from seeing cases of real-world wins.

4TH MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL FRANCHISE: EVOLUTION BY EMILIO MACARAIG III (DEC. 6-7, 2007)
This 2-day seminar will provide participants valuable and applicable insights on how to recognize the distinct principal relationship for better and long-term results. Implementing guidelines to successful service strategies will be discussed and highlighted to cure double-and workshops to enhance their learning methods.

5TH PLAN: THE MISSING PIECE IN THE MARKETING PLAN BY EMILIO MACARAIG III (DEC. 11, 2007)
This one-day seminar teaches participants how to develop a plan or distribution strategy in preparing a marketing plan or even marketing people fail to prepare for this task since this is often delegated to the responsibility of sales.

For complete 2007 schedule of seminars, course outlines, fees, group discounts and other inquiries, please visit our website at www.mansmith.net, email info@mansmith.net, text 0918-81-168-88 or call Alice Torres at telefax nos. (02) 721-2310 / 727-7162.

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BUSINESS Monday

Illiteracy more costly than education

By Rica T. Gichonden

YOU THINK CYBER EDUCATION IS expensive? Try illiteracy, said Thailand's Shinawatra Learning Foundation, which is positioned as a model for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Without giving the total expenditure used to build Thailand's nationwide satellite network for education, foundation chair Ekavadee Saguansiwa said in a recent interview in Bangkok that Thai companies pitched in a total of $2 million baht 12 years ago to serve as seed money for the foundation.

But the money was small compared to the benefits of the program, Saguansiwa told a Philippine delegation led by Department of Education director Lolita Andrada.

He said that before Thailand's "One Class, One Channel" program, children living in poor or calamity-hit areas were prone to abuse, human trade or drug addiction, becoming a cost to society in their adulthood even as it being employable.

That changed in 1995, when the Education Learning Foundation and the King's Wang Klaikangwon School started a project to broadcast live class lectures for 15 channels.

There is one for grades 1 to 11 and three other channels for vocational, university classes and teacher training.

The broadcasts are transmitted via satellite.

In its present form, the program also reaches overseas Thai to keep them rooted to their culture. At the web page www.dlfar.th, Internet users can view the live satellite broadcasts of the 15 channels or select on demand.

With this page, Thais living abroad can refine or study Thai culture under the satellite-enabled learning with the centers in Thai Temples in France, Switzerland, Los Angeles and the Royal Thai consulates in Chicago and New York.

The system in Thailand uses the latest technology which is also available in the Philippines.

Saguansiwa said that, using similar educational needs, however, Thailand and the Philippines, the Distance Learning Foundation is keen on donating a satellite receiver set to the Philippines' DepEd.

He said that hopefully the gesture will facilitate bilateral cooperation on cyber education.

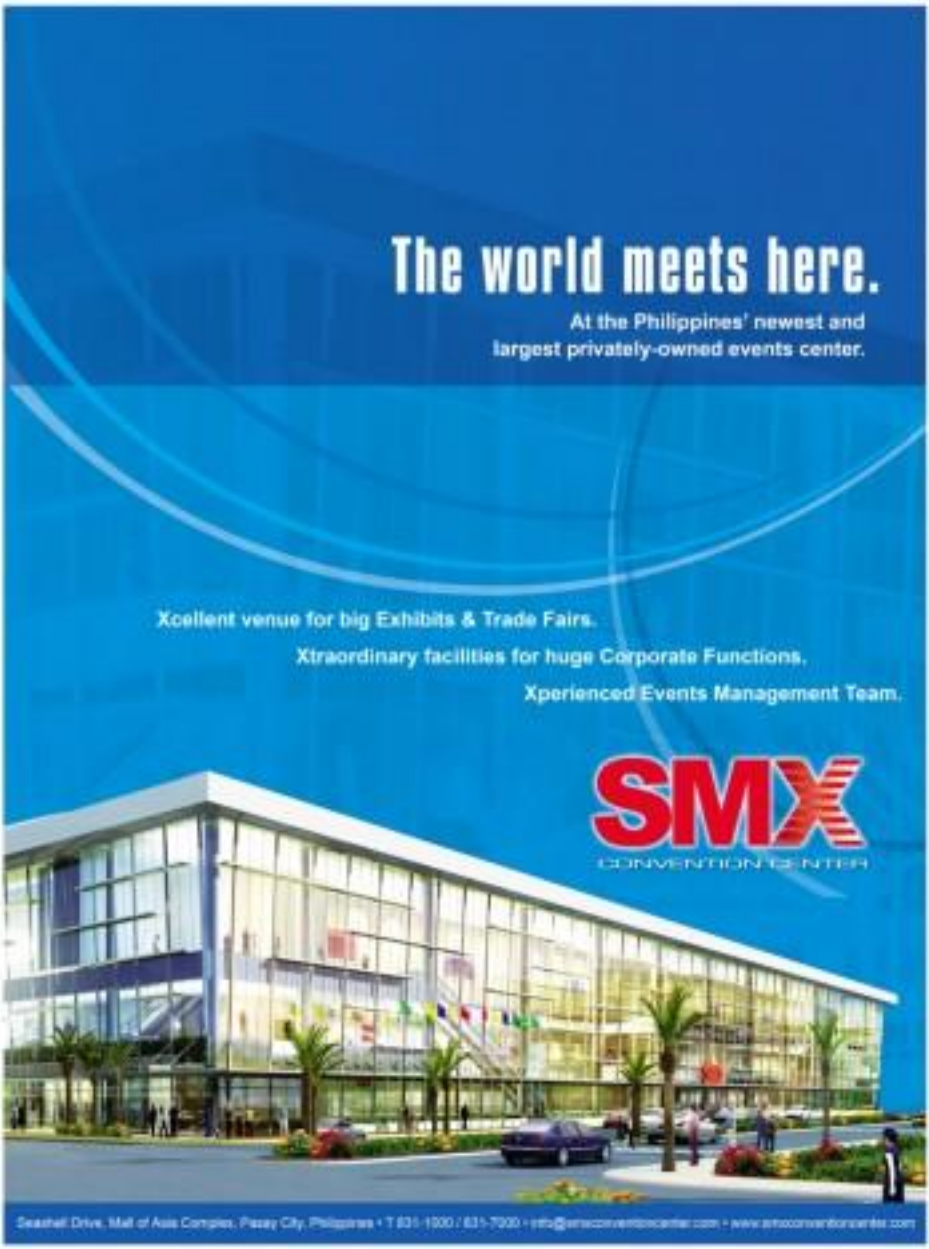
The satellite receiver set would enable the DepEd to capture the same live lectures broadcast to Thai schools for free under the "One Class, One Channel" project.

The DepEd can later make its own content and design its own education system.

Thai Ambassador Asha Dhiravanich, who co-chaired the meeting with DepEd officials, expressed hope that the cooperation will have given rise an future trade effort.

Dhiravanich suggested that the Philippine government make donations for cyber education tax deductible, to make it more attractive for companies to pitch in.

"Something must be done fast for this. since education, it is important to provide good learning to young people now and for it would be even more costly not to, and that is true for the whole Asean," the envoy concluded.



"H2O Rain Falls over On City"

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chela Bautista Formoso

Associate Editor Lito B. Zulueta

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ■ TUESDAY FITNESS ■ WEDNESDAY IBU

Austria's urban 'Cosmos'

DEEPLY FELT EMOTIONS about a place tend to blur the details and features and saturate the shapes, lines and colors in one's mind. These sedimentary splatter on the paintings of Julio José Austria in his fourth one-man exhibition, "Concrete & Steel Cosmos," in Hiraya Gallery at 5/20 United Nations Ave., Ermita, Manila, until Nov. 18.

In his paintings, Austria reduces the Nature to an impossible illusionist. Through the large windows of the brain, his childhood eyes follow with wonder

MORE'S 12

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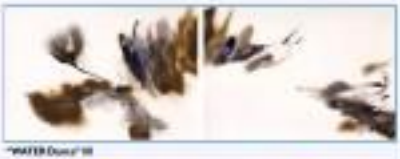

"WATER Dance" III

Lascano's *dancing waves*

By Cid Reyes, Contributor

IN LEONARDO DA VINCI'S "DELUGE" drawings, we see the fusion of the Prime Mover in the great swelling waters of sea, air that churn in all magnificent force.

In Hokusai's famous print "Wave at Kanagawa," a mountain of water rises in overgloomy height and curls into clawing fingers eager to devour and drown the Sagara fishermen.

Of Antonio's 6-panel folding screen, "Waves at Mamohaba," a critic has written: "We created a composition charged with the churning action of waters, yet is solid and permanent in its design, or the rocky crags around which water leaps and churns. He translated his sensitive awareness of nature's phenomena into a dynamic, abstract design. Spatial ambiguity in the sky and water areas suggests an interaction that the viewer is to feel rather than to read as a literal transcription of nature."

Surprisingly, in this Philippines, being an archipelago, and as such surrounded by an expanse of water, the water image has been the subject of only a few visual artists. In sculpture, Jorge Pilapil was hooped by an oceanic theme. Thus, in his hands, bundles of rods and sheets of glass undulate to the rhythm and pattern of the seas.

In painting, Rico Lascano has devoted a segment of solo exhibitions, all somewhat of by the water image. In his quietly still canvases montage the ripples of breaks, streams and rivers, through a web of lines and tubulations of open space environment as a meditative level.

Indeed, his paintings are an immersion in the Zen aesthetic. Water, regarded by Oriental philosophers as "the blood of nature," courses through Lascano's art in a life-giving force. Past exhibitions – with evocative series titles such as "Wandering" and "Streams of Consciousness" – have been a continuing dialogue with this most refreshing – and threatening – element.

"WATER Dance" I

"WATER Dance" V

New treatment

Where this current and latest series of Lascano's works diverges is in his new treatment and approach to the water image. Where once it was all stillness and placidity, now the waters are preliminative, roused to a state of exuberance and exhilaration. Thus, the so-called "Water Dance" paintings, referenced by a subtly choreographic energy.

Archange in sensation is immediate. The

Social realities
as seen by three brothers

By Constantino C. Tejero

ANOTHER SET OF ARTISTIC siblings is making a name on the local art scene: Jerson, Julio and Jeppee Samson. (They count 12 others, don't they?)

Like the Ventinas, the De Veras and the Balceras, the Samsons display a relentless in their respective art, in either points of similarity or polarity. It is this phenomenon we've observed in a family of artists in which, due to proximity, their works either resemble one another because of artistic influence or become distanced as a result of deliberate resistance.

"PUTULE," by Julio Samson

This is again apparent in the exhibit "The Samsons," pieces in oil on canvas, until Nov. 12 in Galeri Gallery, 2/F, GPO Bldg., 122 Xavierville Rd., Quezon City.

Apart from their common medium of oil on canvas, what further unifies the famous brothers in this exhibit is their thematic concern, which is social realities, and they vary only in their expression.

"DEEPLINE," by Jeppee Samson

Jerson, the eldest, sees he is "an observer and storyteller of everyday realities," but by using an expressionistic technique, he has varied monotone imagery into something truly bizarre.

In "Identity," he has segmented the pictorial field into square and rectangular frames each showing a slice from the lives of the urban poor – a series of tableaux in sour hues, hot pink, acid green, searing yellow, brilliant blue, vivid orange and red, lemon-yellow.

The interior is riddled with vignettes of peeping eyes, facility connections, sexual congress (even on the rooftops), fighting, shouting, but also solitude (as in the toilet). The choppy technique enhances the frenzy or sense of urban congestion, the claustrophobia of the world of the slum dwellers.

Julio dissects to unique sentient ills and excesses, serving as an "the spoiled, overindulgent and religious hierarchies." In one piece, his surrealist tendency has gelled and these personages in ecclesiastical party.

"Pasaje" is a surreal scene composed totally related to "The Last Supper" but for the imagery of the dinner guest consuming heads of wild boar, jet (tail), snake, donkey ape, rainbow, crocodile, bird of prey. The surreal vision is emphasized by the artist's manipulation of pictorial space, employing perspectival as well as formal distortion through inverse angle, foreshortening, bold color (reality).

Of the siblings, Jeppee, the youngest, would seem to be the realist in style and technique. In his series, he depicts the woes and frustrations of the public-school teacher.

Everyone knows the state of public education in the country. It is in this context that the artist quietly but effectively pays tribute to what he considers "the new heroes of this generation – teachers who strive to educate their students at all costs and by whatever means in spite of the crisis facing them."

In "Templitus," the stockinet image of a teacher with a stick and his four pupils is accentuated by rough texture, harsh chiaroscuro and near monochrome. But the realism is somewhat subverted by a slight distortion that makes the image surreal, the visual effect imparting more pathos to the children's faces and more strenuous to the teacher's.

The Samson brothers got their Bachelor of Fine Arts, major in Painting, from University of the Philippines. All three have received awards and citations from all national art competitions.

Jerson won the Jurors' Choice in the Art Association of the Philippines Annual Competition (Representational Category); was included on the Top 8 of the Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards; three finalist in the Shell National Students Art Competition; twice finalist in the Metrobank Foundation Young Painters contest; and a finalist in the Philip Morris.

Julio, who's taking up his master's at UP, was a semifinalist in the Philip Morris, Art Metrobank Foundation (both in Sculpture and Painting Categories) and Shell contests.

Jeppee is a triple Grand Prize winner of the Metrobank, GSIS and PLDT art competitions.

"TEMPTATION," by Jerson Samson

"CONDO" I

"CONDO" II

Bagtas at Renaiss

"ART OF ABUL BAGTAS" opens on Oct. 26, 6 p.m., at Gallery Artwalk, Building A, 104 Megamall, Mandaluyong. (632) 911 or 09 18 443861 1.

Austria's urban . . .

From page C1

"AIR Garage Hilling"

"PLAZUPI and Summer"

"CONSTRUCTION on Site"

the large chevron and microphone cables emerging from his home in Agoncillo Highway in Cavite and endlessly into the heart of Manila, where his parents work.

As an adolescent, he learned to march the spots where the traffic would wind and the buses would lurch in a sudden stop. When his entered college at University of Sto. Tomas, the speed lurched the buses began to record his feelings toward the sights of patches of rajes shacks along the road, the thundering sound of jet planes, and the alternating moods and heights of hotels and commercial buildings on the seaside route to and from Espana, Manila.

Today the sights and sounds of the streets of Metro Manila coil around in his mind like a slope-eyed modern urban living.

Edged with a sensibility strong to nuance in humanities – painting, architecture, art design, photography, history, geography, music – that his palette visual soliloquy on the march of progress in the city and the lure of its people: the rosephony from midnight bars; the squalor in thinly lit streets; the rhythm marred by ongoing or abandoned construction projects; the heavy downpour flooding the city; the interchanging smog. On the vacant acres being replaced by giant malls and hotels.

However, Austria's visual style blends the chaos of his themes and subjects. He meshes them with circles of several hues, massive curved outlines by a swath of red and yellow. Their asymmetrical locations within the frame subvert into images of breathing and bulging spaces and masses, a discovery helped in how by the linear motion of the electric poles and the busy zone of cable wire/loops.

Ronac Gallery is at UN United Nations Ave., Ermita, Manila. Call 5211011. Visit www.ronac.com.

weave surface has been disrupted, now erupting into broken pools of opaque grayish colors, still runny and kinship, but blossoming into unexpected floral formations. Brushstrokes are meshed to and fro, spawning droplets from extreme hitches. Sponges mop up errant flows of wax, controlling the pace of energy.

Interestingly, some of the "Moon Dance" paintings look like drag-and-drop dance steps, with dancers' models free-orchestral in space.

Of course, Lanzuza's painterly gestures are an anagrammatic nod to Abstract Expressionist, heralding from the master's impulsive flashes of pigment and forms dredged back from the artist's subconscious and unobstructed opinions.

From a hidden Pond collision, the artist leads the viewer to a swirling fountain of pure abstraction. From a classical serenity and refinement, the viewer steps into a juicy grimace of free-wheeling shapes. From a tranquil gatecrash, the painting breaks into cubiclectary song, like a wrist-cutting the whiplash of a conductor's baton.

While these recent paintings may come as a surprise to Lanzuza's followers, who have admired his geometric reflective works, it is still to note that change and continuity now mark an emerging new phase in his maturing art. Below: The first step is to familiarize in the knowledge of an artist's freedom: the liberty to take one's art wherever the spirit moves him.

Lanzuza's "Silver Dancer" paintings are buoyant, lilting and full of swing-a-dance to the beats of the winds.

The exhibit will run thru 4 Mon. Tue Crucible Gallery, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Telephone 6336661.

COF PRESIDENT Neo Jardin, Socorro Ledesma, Paulina Qua, a major collector of Onib Olmedo paintings, and Henry Qua

PAKIKIJI Endo, Olmedo's erstwhile architectural partner, flew in all the way from the United States to pay tribute to his friend. He is flanked by Dr. Rheza Quimson and Dr. Francesca Joanna Olmedo, Olmedo's daughter

TY PERSONALITY Karina Sanchez, an Onib Olmedo collector, and Andy Abrera, chair of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Looking on are Bettina Olmedo, the artist's widow; writer Elisa Cordero Fernando; Francesca Joanna Arias and Gisella Arizmendi, the artist's children.

Tributes to Onib Olmedo

THREE MAJOR ART GALLERIES ARE PAYing tribute to Onib Olmedo, a major Filipino expressionist of the 20th century, with simultaneous exhibits: the Cultural Center of the Philippines, which is showing the retrospective show, "Dimensions of Depth"; Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is showing "My Friend, Onib Olmedo"; and Gallery Nine at Megamall, which is exhibiting "Twelve Pintors."

The CCP show features representative samples of Onib Olmedo's paintings spanning his entire career from his first exhibit in 1951 until the time he died in 1996, including tabaraks and oil on canvas paintings consisting of portraits and still lifes, departures of pegmoys and triptyches demanding mobility, the pastel paintings exhibited in the landmark show in Sweden known as "The Vienna Collection," and the two tabaraks paintings which won awards at the international competition in Cagnes-Sur-Mer, France, in 1952.

The Metropolitan Museum exhibit features the rare collection of Silvana Diaz, proprietress of Galeria Duemila, while the Gallery Nine show highlights Olmedo's skill in drawing the human figure with his pastel sketches of nudes.

Onib Olmedo is the most critically acclaimed figurative expressionist artist of his generation. His paintings are soul portraits that explore the inner torments, the spiritual, alienation and psychological devastation of modern man. They exist as emphatic cathartic impact on the viewer, and at the same time, have an uplifting quality as they celebrate the triumph of the human spirit in the face of pain and anguish.

One of the most awarded Filipino artists of the 20th century Olmedo won gold medals from the Art Association of the Philippines and the Makiti Oil awards. He also won two awards at the international competition in Cagnes-Sur-Mer, France, the very first Filipino to be accorded such a distinction. An artist who was way ahead of his time, Onib Olmedo indisputably played a major role in the history of Philippine art. During his lifetime, he succeeded in raising the art consciousness of Filipinos to a level that went beyond the appreciation of art in terms of its superficial and ornamental dimensions.

Olmedo's paintings have served to expand the Filipino's artistic sense to go beyond the visual appeal of paint on art and to compass the deeper meanings of paintings as social commentary and psychological catalysts. His influence is felt up to this day with his style inspiring a whole new generation of young artists in the 21st century who are self-confessed disciples of the late master.

ALLAN Cenia, Olmedo's best friend, sings Olmedo's favorite Filipino song, "Bituing Marikit."

MCEV Gutierrez, proprietor of Chinese GTV which was Onib Olmedo's favorite hang-out, is introduced to Karina Sanchez by Bettina Olmedo

ARTISTS Ramon Diaz and Phyllis Zaballero

MV and Gisella Marie Arizmendi

SILVANA Diaz of Galeria Duemila and Nicholai Artist Bonsak

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Alex Cabagnot's Calorie Management

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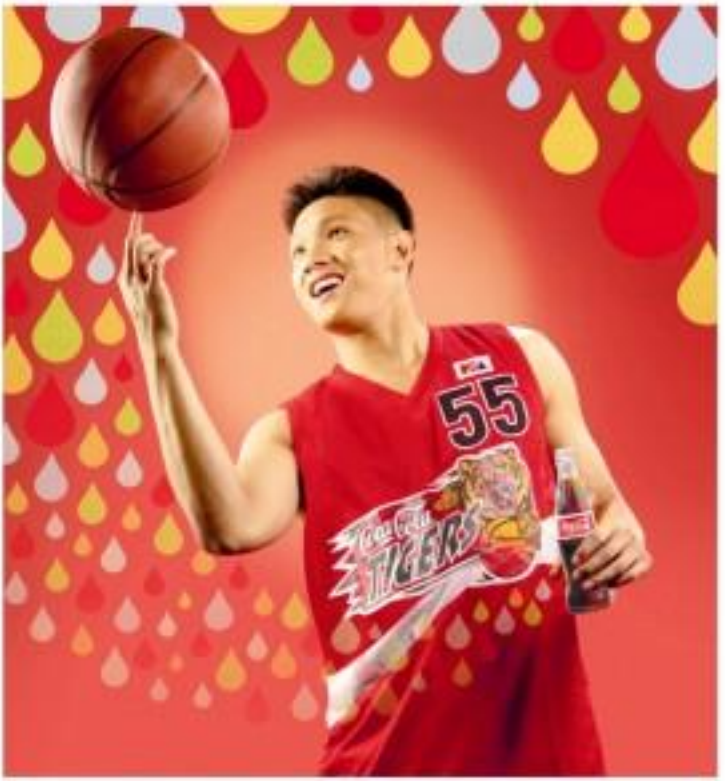
Basketball player Alex Cabagnot shares the same belief, saying that "good health depends on our ability to take care of our body through a balanced diet and a daily dosage of physical activities." He believes that in maintaining balance, you end up feeling better about yourself. He also goes on to say, "Being active and having a balanced diet make you feel less tired. They give you more of the energy you need to enjoy whatever life gives you."

Manage Your Calories

Learn how to manage your calories. Make full use of them and enjoy life. Engage in a sport, enroll in a gym, and continue to find ways for you to remain physically active. This way, you get to happily refresh your body and soul with each and every taste of your most loved softdrink from the Coca-Cola Company.



"A BALANCED LIFE IS ALL ABOUT GIVE AND TAKE.

When I do a lot of physical activity like playing basketball and coaching kids, I burn the calories I take in. So I can have the drinks that make me happy."

Alex Cabagnot
Basketball Player and Coach

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To have and to hold

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ACROSS
1 Subject to
6 Hoodlum's
10 Tattered rags
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17 Bamboozled
18 Tiles
19 Spreadsheet
20 Hiding
21 Lisa Simpson,
22 Kept
24 Kind of sax or
25 Locale against
27 Transformers
30 Long, tiring
31 Sounds of this
32 Hang in France
33 Idiot message
37 Some of this
38 Mad Libs
39 Mad Libs
40 Area of —
42 Look after
43 Hop pokes
47 French water
48 Lifesick
50 Famous
51 Scottish county
54 Forge
55 Curiosity
56 Wasatch Range
58 Certain mutual
59 Mosquito
60 Mimic
61 Sour neighbor
62 Cattle ranchers
66 In this place
67 Mountainside,
68 Motor unit
69 Large snake
70 Tableau cut
71 Low-budget

DOWN
1 Roosevelt's
2 Fred Wyngarde
3 Choke-chain
4 As originally
5 Romance
6 Muffin
7 Mississippi
8 Actress
9 Antonio
10 Dilly ladies
11 Turf piece
12 Phillies, at the
13 Capon
21 Lowdown
23 Cartoon's friend
24 Hebrew letter
26 Crown cover
27 Garden shoot
28 Marry a man
29 Dunes predator
30 Neighbor of
31 Mosquito
32 Modern flow
33 Light bulb
34 Roller Rollers
35 French
36 Cleaning speech
40 Who's Behind
41 Pungent bulb
42 Farmer Yukkon
43 Tall blower
44 Cookware
45 Closing
46 Japanese
47 Dissolve
49 Gatewood
51 Choreographer
52 Gabriel's
53 Mocks, as a
57 Final Four org.

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

By Barry Silk
Wilcam, VA

YOU BORN TODAY You have deep feelings and keen powers. Although outwardly calm, you are very intense. You have strong personalities and you are determined to get your own way. You are also very sensitive. In your love affairs, you become overly jealous about life. You are also self-conscious, although in conversation, both the beginning of things and the end.

Birthdate of: Brian Adams, singer/photographer; Sam Shepard, play wright/actor; Martin Sheen, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 20) "I was about to call you," she tells you at 4:30a.m. Life feels like that for you, as you jerk all of reality. Conventions are a novelty. This means you have to be careful.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Tomorrow can't you couldn't today. Be patient with your partner, who is experiencing stress and also with children. Don't worry if plans for vacations are delayed. Living is fluid.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Power struggles with parents are likely. Be careful about how to make improvements. Unfortunately, the more you try to change things, the more they stay the same. You might not even know. Others can make up their own minds about you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You have an unusual ability to see into the future. Being better at contemplating than at communicating, trying to carry things to a certain point. You just can't make your ideas become anyone concerned can accept.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) You might feel a bit stressed about your relationship. Trying to be more loving, better at communicating, trying to carry things to a certain point. You just can't make your ideas become anyone concerned can accept.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Your preparations for something today is a bit close to the wire. Don't worry, you'll be a big success. And you'll get a lot done.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You're doing a lot of thinking about your future. Your business is expanding, and you're considering making a career change. Maybe you should go back to school.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Friends and associates are likely to be supportive. However, be careful not to overdo it. Don't overextend yourself. Your love life is going well.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Your creative juices are flowing. You're full of ideas, and you're willing to try them out. Be careful, however, not to overdo it. Don't overextend yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Others appreciate your efforts. Your performance is outstanding. You're considered practical, but not to the point of being boring. Your love life is also good. You're full of ideas, and you're willing to try them out.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Others don't understand you. You're full of ideas, and you're willing to try them out. Be careful, however, not to overdo it. Don't overextend yourself. Your love life is also good.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Be patient with partners and children. Don't overextend yourself. Your love life is also good. You're full of ideas, and you're willing to try them out. Be careful, however, not to overdo it. Don't overextend yourself.

Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Green

		2	8		6	5		
9	6		4		7		3	1
	3						2	
		3	5		1	7		
		7		4		9		
		6	7		2	1		
	4						7	
7	5		2		4		8	6
		8	9		3	4		

Difficulty Level: Moderate

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	3	1	2	5	7	6	4	8
8	5	2	4	1	6	9	7	3
6	7	4	3	9	8	1	2	5
5	1	3	7	6	9	2	8	4
7	8	6	1	2	5	4	3	9
2	4	9	8	3	1	7	5	6
3	9	8	6	7	4	5	1	2
4	6	7	9	8	3	5	1	2
1	2	5	6	7	4	8	9	3

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Arts high school marks 30th year

FOR BALLERINA SOFIA ZOBEL, other artists and art administrators in the country's show-biz arts circles, and sundry art aficionados, all roads led to Mt. Madding last weekend.

The 30th anniversary of the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) at the Malcolm Area Center in Mt. Madding, Los Baños, Laguna, was highlighted by a two-hour performing arts extravaganza at the Tanghalang Maria Makiling last Friday evening, followed by a booth-celebrating the grand alumni homecoming.

Titled "Hiyas," the show featured 130 dancers from acclaimed dance companies—ballet Philippines; Dance Nirvana's Dreamdancer; Kalayaw Dance Troupe; Dans Ishi-University in Dumaguete City; Kabook Philippine Music and Dance Ministry; Sacrosanct; Santelli Pangbut Masamayao; and the PHSA's resident folk dance company, the Tanghalan Pangbut Mananayaw, which is also celebrating its 30th year.

Former Sanghiyan members now with the Bonifacian and Fuerzosdo (College of St. Benilde) and at the University of the Philippines in Diliman participated in the anniversary production.

"We're 30 and getting younger," beamed Reynaldo O. Wong, deputy director of PHSA.

Founded by the former First Lady Imelda Marcos in 1977, the PHSA serves "to develop artistically gifted and talented students by implementing a special secondary education curriculum and support program committed to the conservation and promotion of the Filipino artistic and cultural traditions."

Housed in a sprawling campus designed by National Artist for Architecture Leandro Locsin, the school resides the individual atmosphere of a mountain resort.

But. And both the students—some 150 every school year—decidedly are not.

Selected through annual auditions and examinations throughout the archipelago, the students—who receive free tuition, free board and lodging in picturesque dormitories, a monthly stipend, master classes with accomplished artists, and the chance to represent the Philippines in arts events and internationally

changes—are expected to grow artistically in five disciplines: theater; dance (ballet or folk); music (voice or instrument); visual arts and creative writing.

Notable alumni include painters Roberto Aventa, Aries Cueva and Albert Tiu; Cannes-winning filmmaker Raymond Red; the singer Grace Nono; visual artists Gerry Leonard, Alwyn Reamillo, John Cinco, Pablo Baglang-ona, Ian Pettersen, Jess Salcedo-ya, Hugo Yonson, Rowayda de Guia, writer Nick Pichay, and many of today's leading dancers in ballet, modern and folk dance companies led by Lola Flores-ino, star of international editions of the musical "Miss Saigon."

In February, the president of Singapore, BE Nathan, visited PHSA and congratulated the students for their commitment to Philippine culture.

In July, Imelda Marcos celebrated her birthday at the school, and the students serenaded her with songs.

"Here in Makiling, we continue to cherish the ideals of the arts, the good and the beautiful," said PHSA director Hosma Cortillo.

Auditions for next year's freshman batch are now ongoing at the following regional arts centers or specified dance:

Mariano Marcos Memorial High School, 3000 Cannon St., Bic. Ave., Manila—Nov. 6; and PHSA—Nov. 7.

Graduating elementary students with outstanding abilities in the arts are encouraged to apply for the scholarships. Check out www.phsa.edu.ph. Or get in touch with Reynaldo O. Wong at wongreynaldo@yahoo.com. Or call 09175496603 or 0917546603.

HIGH ON ART: Students celebrate 30 years of art in Mt. Madding

"MALACAÑANG by the River"

"PROGRESO"

"PAGMAMA"

Rubio's 'Old Manila'

IN CELEBRATION OF its fifth anniversary, Galerie Joaquin Marc presents Dominic Rubio's "Old Manila," an exhibition of works inspired by the Philippines during the latter part of the Spanish colonial era (1850-1898) and the early American colonial period (1900-1930).

In the show, which opens Nov. 13 and runs till Nov. 26, Rubio's concern is to capture the nostalgia and romanticism of these periods while giving them a modern sensibility and artistic appeal.

Rubio, who turns 37 this year, will be presenting 27 oil on canvas works.

A founding member of the Gerweary Group and a graduate of the University of Santo Tomas/College of Fine Arts, Pia Ida was featured in "Bahli Manila," the inaugural exhibit when Galerie Joaquin Marc opened its doors in 2003.

It was also Rubio's show "Early Times" that became the exhibit when Galerie Joaquin Singapore opened at The Regent of Singapore.

In "Old Manila," city folk found great pleasure in participating performing arts such as the theater, the komedya, the sarsuela and going to exhibitions. Other times they would be visiting parks and gardens, in particular the Luneta. Or they would promenade the Escolta-Arcade, or the sprawling grounds once University of Santo Tomas ("Plaza Mira Flores"). Pia

Many families ("Pamilyang Pilipino") and couples as well enjoyed the almost ritualistic peace where one would promenade in all their finery ("Hada colong by the River and Gisang"). Other pastimes or forms of leisure included the cockfight at the sabong ("Tinong Sabungero").

Sundays were special occasions when the gentleman of the house would bring his favorite fighting cock to the cockfight and the lady of the house prepared or go for refreshments both dressed in their Sunday best ("Ginoo" and "Ginang").

In the Philippines became a major exporter of tobacco with Philippine cigars enjoying equivalent prestige in Europe as their Cuban counterparts, both men and women learned how to enjoy a good puff.

Intermarriages occurred resulting in the mestiza, whether Spanish-Filipino or Chinese-Filipino. Wealth was accumulated by the compradors who handled the export trade via the government-supervised export-import monopoly of the Galleon Trade between Manila and Mexico.

The high-heeled greasy from the comprador group as well as the landlords who owned the large agricultural plantations came in for hearers as the "Señor" and "Señora."

"PAMILYANG Pilipino"

"CHINA Rose"

Such is the musical world of Dominic Rubio. Relying on past themes, he has succeeded in interpreting them in a highly contemporary style that has become very popular in today's art scene. He subjects with long evening strolls suggest an instinct that a people with much to be proud of, thanks to their rich culture and heritage.

Galerie Joaquin Marc is at 371 F Guevara St., cor. Rhemerson Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan (tel. 7219253 or 7239658). Visit www.galerie.joaquin.com

Book on church façades launched

"FAÇADES," A NEW BOOK ON Philippine Baroque churches by Augustinian Fr. Pedro Galende, was launched on Aug. 30 at the historic church of San Agustin Church in Intramuros.

Those who attended the launching included Manila Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Rosales, Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, Alfredo Tuazo of the Spanish Embassy, Manila Mayor Alfredo S. Lim, and Cultural Heritage Commissioner Ludovico Badoy.

The book is both a photographic voyage exploring Baroque architecture and an encyclopedia of Filipino religious and architectural history.

Galende—a renowned architect and historian whose legions of Filipino students, surpervisors and designers had polished into a definitive Filipino architecture.

The book is a large visual compendium of Philippine churches with between 1565 and 1898. It features over 400 color and 161 archival photographs, covering virtually every region in the Philippines from Batanes to Mindanao.

"Philippine Church Façades" is a major reference work not only for those interested in ecclesiastical and architectural works, but also for ordinary Filipinos who still enjoy the many architectural delights their ancestors had lovingly preserved through 400 years despite fire, floods, typhoons, earthquakes, war and colonial exploitation.

The book stands as a testament to the Philippines' enduring cultural heritage, a reminder of the Filipino religious routine in the face of adversity. Historian and columnist Ambeth Ocampo says, "the book helps us discover our religious and cultural heritage, making us proud of our heritage and future."

José Rodriguez, director of Instituto Cervantes, says the book is "a visual feast of both historical and contemporary photographs through which hundreds of years of history unfold before the reader." Here one discovers the "joyous exuberance of Spaniards and Filipinos who brought zeal and ingenuity to building wondrous houses of worship."

Fr. Pedro G. Galende, OSA, is the director of San Agustin Museum. The color photos were taken by Isa Cabigas, Erik Lacson and the author himself.

The book is available at the San Agustin Museum and leading bookstores nationwide.

Call: 5274060, 5266794 and 5266793.

ALVARO Yoyo, deputy of the Embassy of Spain; Fr. Pedro Galende, OSA, author of "Façades"; Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, Manila Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Rosales, Manila Mayor Alfredo S. Lim, and publisher Gaspar Vitol

Traditional arts at UST Museum

"ANG LIHIM NG BAYBIN SA SANTO TOMAS: Exploring Traditional Arts" focuses on folk arts and crafts. It's an exhibit by the Traditional Filipino Arts (TFA) faculty of the College of Fine Arts and Design of University of Santo Tomas.

The group was featured in final essays of interesting the teaching of traditional Filipino arts into the visual arts curriculum.

In the art exhibition, the TFA faculty and their students will share what they have learned from their art making encounters with the traditional artists of Bulacan, Batanes and Paete. Works consist of, or are inspired by, the pabalat ng panulat (pasalibe wrapper), pare (paper kite), abaniko (art of brooding) and the inlay (papier mâché).

Craft demonstration sessions will be held during the exhibit.

It will be formally opened today (Nov. 5) at 10 a.m. at the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences. The museum is open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The show runs until Nov. 16. The UST Museum, the country's oldest, is at the basement of the UST Main Building, España, Manila. Call 7611611.

BATAD AND SAGADA

UST Architecture students rest before a traditional Ifugao house in Batad.

SAGADA's lively Saturday market

A walk in the clouds

Text and photos by Manuel Mastino
Lopez del Castillo Mesina
Cover feature

THE HEREDITAL RICE TERRACES remind everyone not always to associate schooling with paper readings, tests and the Socratic method of endless questions and answers. Today's learning environment can be diverse and exciting, fulfilled and challenging.

At the College of Architecture of University of Santo Tomas, senior and graduating students study and experience architecture not only through traditional classroom learning but also through site visitations and cultural immersions.

Two places have earned a reputation as the alternative classrooms of Intramuros and fifth-year UST architecture students: the barrio of Batad in Banaue, Ifugao; and the town of Sagada in Lalawigan ng Bontoc, or Mountain Province.

For two decades, this writer, an assistant professor of the college and a senior researcher of the UST Center for International Studies, has, with the assistance of other architecture faculty members, been bringing a motley crew of Manila urbanites to the communities of the Cordillera. This is to expose pampered and "multilled" students to the realities of basic living and the beauty and tranquility of the mountainside.

Batad and Sagada are similar yet different in what they have to offer students of general studies. They expose students to the challenges of the natural environment.

Extreme Batad

Batad is an experience of the extreme. Its wealth through a series of hot and jagged rides, plus a challenging hike, it offers the marvels of the world-renowned rice terraces.

The community is unlike fast developing Banaue, with no highland and ethnic-chaotic jungle of souvenir, tit-clad architecture, criss-crossing overhead water and electric lines, compounded by bicycle, jeep and bus noise and fumes.

Batad is relatively remote and traditional in architecture, sensory environment, culture and tradition. Here one experiences not only the breathtaking beauty of the Batad amphitheater for rice, which should not be attributed for the more famous Banaue Rice Terraces, but also the rustic simplicity of a community where electricity is not a priority cell-phone signal is not available, and time not a factor.

The community experiences problems of cultural invasions, such as uncontrolled garbage, from both locals and tourists. There also appears the rush to modernize among the locals, resulting in the traditional fish houses being abandoned or "improved" with galvanized-iron sheets. Modernization also means the abandonment of some treasures.

An interesting counterpoint is the mechanisms created by the advent of tourism. The presence of European backpackers seems to have resulted in the development of a thriving hippie culture in the area. No amount of bad press from the Julia Campbell slaying can destroy a beautification such as Batad.

INTERIORS of Saint Mary the Virgin Church, Sagada

TAPIA Falls, Batad

STAIRWAY to the clouds

Aside from a hiking experience with the terraces as a spectacular backdrop, Batad has other things to offer such as the Tapia Waterfalls, the native handicrafts, and, of course, for design students, the community's architecture, the people's methods of construction, both for houses and terraces, and the natural and organic layout of the place.

Revival of the traditional

Tourism has allowed the locals to organize themselves as guides and to provide visitors with homestay accommodations.

With any possibility, the community has made initiatives toward the revival of traditional architecture. The traditional houses thereby became means to house the guests.

There have also been attempts by the community to revive native dances and artifacts/customs. Some, like the weaving of the native attire, the bahag (loincloth), is seeing a revival. (I'm tempted to force students to wear the native attire and sample the ripanga as part of their grade requirements.)

The yearly tradition of "hooping" to Batad allows students to marvel at sites seen only in postcards or in music video of the Singaporean band Sixth Sense.

By staying even for three days in the community the students are exposed not just to the rigors of living in a relatively simple and traditional community; they also get to experience the challenges these communities face in trying to survive and compete amid the onslaught of modern world.

Sagada's amenities

Sagada is entirely different. It is a town complete with amenities for the harried urbanite.

It has a wider array of accommodations, more refined meals (thanks to the presence of expatriates who have intermarried with the locals and now call Sagada their home). It has electricity, mobile-phone signal, and transportation. What Batad lacks in basic amenities and commodities, Sagada easily provides.

Sagada is Ifugao 40 years back. Peaceful, slow paced, and natural, it offers students a glimpse of how a community holds dearly to traditions, but at the same time, embraces the needs of progress.

Though Sagada can be classified as considered small-town resort, with a lively Saturday market, a must-see for students who are interested in how rural communities do business in the boondocks, it does provide a venue for students to appreciate the marriage of nature, culture, tradition and progress.

That marriage could be seen in the attitude of the local funeraries, who, though embracing the Episcopalian faith, still cling to traditional values such as the burial of the dead, who are stashed on caves or hanging on mountain cliffs. The funeraries also preserve and conserve their culture through the wearing of their native cloth into various fashionable items.

Sadly, unlike in Batad where traditional architecture is being preserved and built, it is harder and harder to find traditional Kadangyan dwellings in Sagada.

Also missed is a glimpse of the traditional dance and oral tales that Batad has even fit to revive and promote, albeit for the tourist's sake.

Greatest architect

Sagada's main draw is nature, its most popular destination is the caves.

Though spelunking is not part of the UST architecture curriculum, I have always enjoined my students to experience dim, smoke and fire caves that will make them more aware of what communities have to offer and underground have these attractions enable communities to survive, grow and prosper.

Sumaguing Cave in Sagada's prime attraction. Challenging and adventurous, a trek to "the center of the world" is made more memorable not by the experience of getting soaked in ice-cold water or crippling in some limestone, but more by seeing close at hand the caves sphere through gaslights cast on the enormous space by visitors and locals.

Through the lights, the chamber becomes a veritable cathedral, evoking the majesty of nature that only the Supreme Architect can create.

Experiencing Sumaguing Cave in Sagada and the Rice Terraces in Batad is not only an educational experience, but also a spiritual one, an occasion of deep bonding and camaraderie, of cooperation and friendship among students themselves, between students and faculty and to a greater extent, between the college the students and faculty represent and the community that welcomes them.

For in Batad and Sagada, where nature and tradition are supreme, all artificialities of city living are abandoned. In communion with nature and the simple people, the students find direct communion with the greatest architect ever—God!

LIFESTYLE

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FROM BOOK TO FILM

Ang Lee's controversial thriller

SCREEN newcomer Tang Wei and Chinese star Tony Leung in Ang Lee's "Lust, Caution"

FROM ANG LEE, THE ACADEMY Award-winning director of "Brokeback Mountain" and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," comes what's bound to be the most controversial film of the year: "Lust, Caution," winners of the Golden Lion Prize (Best Picture) at the recent Venice Film Festival.

The critically acclaimed film is also Taiwan's official entry to the Best Foreign Language film race in next year's Academy Awards.

A startling erotic espionage thriller about the fate of an ordinary woman's heart, it is based on the short story "Se, Jie" by revered Chinese author Eileen Chang, and stars Asian cinema icons Tony Leung ("Hero," "In the Mood for Love") opposite screen newcomer Tang Wei.

"Lust, Caution" begins in Shanghai, 1942. The World War II Japanese occupation of the Chinese city continues in force. Mrs. Mak, a woman of sophistication and means, walks into a cafe, places a phone call, and then sits and waits. She remembers how her story began several years earlier in 1938 China.

She is not (in fact Mrs. Mak, but she Wang Chia-Chi (Tang Wei). With the fervent Nationalist Wei underway, Wang has been left behind by her father, who has escaped to England. As a freshman at university, she meets fellow

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TEHSE voices from "Last, Cantos"

LEUNG as a ruthless Japanese collaborator

WANG Leaders as a fiery revolutionary

LEE directing Tang Wei

Ang Lee's controversial thriller

Pretzel p3

modest Kuang Yu Min (Wang Leehom). Hoping his mates'd admire his bravery, he tells them he's in love with Mrs. Mak, who will grant Yee's wish. Yee believes Mrs. Mak's husband is a mahjong cheat and that frees the man into an affair. Wang transforms herself utterly inside and out, and the woman's proceeds as scripted—until an unexpected

THE FILM re-creates 1940s Shanghai to perfection.

twist befalls her upon her return.

With no end in sight for the occupation, Mak is—having originated from Hong Kong—gone through the motions of her existence. Made to live surprise, Kuang re-enters her life. Some part of the organized resistance, he enlists her to agent betray Mak in a revival of the plot to kill Yee, who as head of the collaborationist secret service has become even more a key part of the puppet government. As Wang regresses her earlier role, and it doesn't ever clear to her dangerous grasp of the flesh her very identity being profiled to the limit: ...

Beautiful, cruel

"To me, no story of Chen Ai-ling's (Eileen Chang) is as beautiful or as cruel as 'Lust, Caution,'" explains Ang Lee. "She created the story his years and years—for decades—reserving it as a criminal might return to the scene of a crime, or as a victim might re-enact a trauma, reaching for pleasure only by varying, and re-imagining the pain. Making 'Lust, Caution,' we didn't really 'adapt'. Chen's novel, we re-operated it, just as her characters act and re-enact their pasts."

Lee continues, "Chen describes the feeling Wong Chia Chi had after performing on stage as a young woman; the rush she felt afterwards, as she could barely calm down, even after a late night meal with her friends from the theatre and a ride on the upper deck of a tram. "When I read that, my mind raced back to my own first experience on the stage, back in 1973 at the Academy of Art in Taipei," Lee adds. "The same rush of energy at the end of the play I had acted in, the same late-night exuberance and disorientation. I was overjoyed to find that experience was sensitive. Chen's work, and how it could be transformed into film.

"The audiovisual play-acting and mimicry is something by nature human animals, like fine characters, are camouflage to their environments and to hunt their prey that mimicry and performance are also ways we spoon ourselves, as human beings, to greater experience, to individuate connections to others, in higher meanings, in art, and to the truth," Lee concludes.

Opening across the Philippines on Nov. 7, "Lust, Caution" is Focus Features (the distributed by Columbia Pictures.

The poet's gift to humanity

... is the ability to recognize beauty and truth in life's modest moments, thus opening the windows of the human soul

POETRY lovers during the Silliman Speakeasy Poetry Reading at A Silliman Basketball Gymnasium, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

POETS Marjorie Evasco and Alma Maria Karighak

by Shirley G. Lua
Contributor

WHAT IS THE PLACE of poetry in a universe beset by violence and terror? Shall poetry be heeded or be ridden? Or shall it call forth like a still small voice out of the whirlwind?

After his country suffered from the ravages of World War II, Pablo Neruda wondered: "After the end of the world," after death, / I found myself in the midst of life / creating myself / building life / people around landscapes / ... Man must be saved / I said. / And night and dust / what must be saved / I answered man."

This is the work of the poet in the age of the Apocalypse: to offer art like a lamb on the altar, and to give hope to humanity through the healing power of the word.

In the aftermath of political scandals and the Glorietta tragedy, a brilliant thunderstorm recently held a special literary event in Sercados, Southeast Global City: Silliman Speakeasy Poetry Reading. This featured poets were Marjorie Evasco and her sister Maria Karighak, who read their poems and answered on the art of poetry.

Marjorie Evasco is the author of two collections of poetries, "Dreamweavers: Selected Poems: 1976-1986" (Ateneo Editions, 2006) and "Other Times: Poetry in English and Cebuano" (Salimbayan Books, 1999). Both won the National Book Awards from the Manila Critics Circle. Her latest work, "Ang Tula sa Ikalawang Siglo" (Ang Tinapay Binja Lungay, Bohlano, Fairest" (U of Santo Tomas Publishing, 2006), received from the Manila Critics Circle the Alfonso T. Ongpin Award for Best Book on Art.

Alma Maria Karighak is an enchanting new voice in Philippine poetry. She has won twice in the Palanca Literary Awards, and the year grabbed first prize in the Philippines Free Press Literary Contest.

The poetry reading was structured like a concert, with seven stellar points: Six Poets, Poetry and Painting, Poetry and Music, Synchronicities, Eros, The Spiritual, and Commotion. As convenors, Silliman writer Isabel Lava introduced each part.

Both poets have embarked on the exploration of the ekphrastic imagination, i.e., poetry inspired by visual art. Of her poem, "Woman," which alludes to Leonardo Da Vinci's method of painting, Karighak said, "It signifies his take on mystery and paradox—how the artist should launch into mystery and paradox and not be afraid to commit. In fact, it is in the midst of mystery and paradox that the artist creates."

Evasco, who recited "Origami," responded, "One of the things I like about poetry is that it uses no less words and then it explodes outside you. Like the 'stroke' of the drama is, it evokes the mystery. It doesn't point directly to it, but it makes you aware there is a bigger reality something not seen, very veiled. Therefore, it needs a way of hinting, a way of getting through the space/ time of life and getting to a subtle, humbler, sounder way of living."

WRITER Susan Lara

Unusual modes

The eight-article approach defines several modes of seeing life through art. Evasco remarked that "we are not just doing something something that is in the frame but the picture outside the frame accentuates the story."

Her "La Condition Humaine" boldly invites art of Rene Magritte's painting to imagine an other dimension: "She turns to the man beside her, / As if to say the unfinished how inside. / And outside the means of love / The landscape was not always unanswered. / How, every time she turned her heart / It is to speak to reveal the true form / Of being, themselves were already mapped / In the light of images, like the moon rising / Vocalized but into another line."

And Evasco would conclude in a "gritty" note, "In an time they shall end to elsewhere."

Alternative endings

Karighak was struck by the painter's power to designate alternative endings. "Rene Cazenave's rendition was he had Orpheus and Eurydice just looking at each other. For me it says the painter insisting on an entirely different ending, where nobody disappears. It's not that he didn't know how the myth ended, it's just that he wanted to change the ending. He felt it was more just and more his if she myth had ended that way."

She then asked, "Isn't it the job of the poet to do the same thing in poetry—to weave endings, or to invoke certain kinds of endings, to capture life out the way it is, but the way it should be?"

Her poem, "Jean Cocteau Gleanes Orpheus and Eurydice," echoed the painter's vision and dares the Greek myth, "Now within the frame. Someone in the dark. / Calls out his name and then / Mumbles a breathless the mistake. / Interrogates the heart that knows no line. / Is salvation. Because beloved. Hold this heartbeat / In a pure and lamp the heat down for."

Indeed poetry sees far more, as it gazes inward, and the spirit breaks into a song of sorrow or wonder. Another poem of Karighak, "Believe," is a psalm rendered "Believe in the hours of live and sorrow" where the persona faces the twilight: "The life becomes an exultingquest / on another you'd think it didn't know / any other way to be built. / As when I held out my palms / Because there are flocks that come to pass / Upon the one that counts them, / I need the birds to come, I need to know / What to do with my hands."

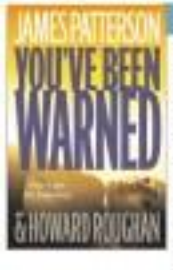
Evasco's new poem "Signal Signaling of the 10,000 Paths" is such an exquisite counterpoint of form and language. The poet's images leap off to arrest that stunning moment of a white-haired woman in an evening' parties, 'using water' as ink to write ancient verses on stones.

This is Evasco's voice: "Like dragonflies, the characters dip and rise, use measure / On the stone, and in the next breathing near to the chair. / Of sunlight. Soon, she finishes the poem and pauses to view / The last glistening line of words fade into nothingness."

The persona observes that as the waters recede fade, the old woman stays all over again. The poem's closing lines evoke such warmth and respect towards nature: "Again / Of the fragility and transience of life's work, praises us. 'Real everyday love. / This is what she does: writing each lovingly with water / Until the first waves fade."

Evasco's poem underscores the triumph of the human spirit—its resilience and persistence to go on. And that is the poet's gift to humanity: the ability to recognize beauty and truth in life's modest moments, thus opening the windows of the human soul.

As Nobel Laureate Gordon Willey says, "What is poetry admits does not save / Nations or people? ... In this and only this / Find salvation."



Recommended readings

ONE NIGHTMARE CHANGES everything. On the verge of a breakthrough as a professional photographer, a woman is suddenly jolted by a chilling, murderous dream. The nocturnal vision begins to plague her every night, and before long, even haunting her daytime hours. A James Patterson thriller, "You've Been Warned," will keep you up late.

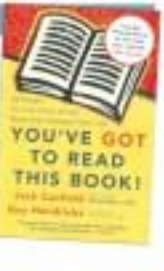
Looking for insight and illumination or simply for that next great book to read? "You've GOT to Read This Book!" by Jack Canfield and Gay Hendricks is a treasure trove of personal stories of books that changed the lives of an impressive roster of notable individuals from Dave Barry, Stephen Covey, Jacquelyn Mitchard, to John Gray.

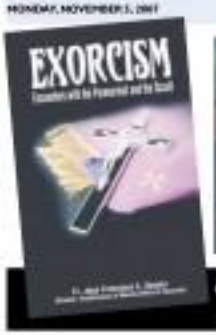
In a world nearly like ours, Alaska is a beautiful, rough, and-tumble country ruled by a famously eccentric royal family who are about to become foodder for even more gossip since the King's "royal cub" came back in the form of a surprise princess, Sandrina Stern, in Mary Janice Davidson's "The Royal Mess."

A powerful connection exists in the universe—between the creator of the universe and the creation whom he loves. "The Secret Things of God" by Dr. Henry Cloud reveals 20 age-old secrets of God-some of which have been true since before Creation and revealed 2000 years ago when the Creator of the Universe became human.

From New York Times best-selling author Michael Palmer comes a novel of medical suspense that focuses on a seemingly disconnected lives merging unrelentingly toward one another. Jolted by "The 60th Vial," Medical student, scientist and private eye will learn the deeper meanings of hell, fiance and madness, truth and deception, trust and betrayal.

The books are available at Powerbooks Specialty Store, which has branches at Greenbelt 4 (757-9428 to 29), Megamall (631-2898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (850-9562 to 63), Glorietta 3 (752-7973), Shangri-La (633-8833 to 39), Trinoma (233-3334/ 524-3681), Mall of Asia (556-0940), Festival Supermall (856-8211), and Trinoma (957-1581/82).





Fr. José Francisco C. Syquia, who took up higher studies at Rome's Angelicum, autographs copies of his bestselling book.

'Exorcism,' now on its second edition

DO GHOSTS REALLY EXIST? ARE THERE haunted houses? Is it true that one can be possessed by demons?

These and more questions about the epic in are answered by the bestselling book, "Exorcism: Encounters with the Unseen-Real and On Occult," written by Fr. José Francisco C. Syquia, director of the Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism.

Published by Shepherd's Voice Publications Inc., the new edition of "Exorcism" is now available in National Book Store branches at 40 percent discount.

Syquia has performed countless exorcism rites, showing how the powers of God can defeat satan's evil spirits.

In his introduction to the book, Fr. Syquia says his reason for book because in the Philippines, there is a growing fascination for the paranormal and a hunger for answers and resolutions to demonic harassment. "There seems to be no end to the supply of paranormal accounts since we as a nation have always had a certain religiosity that opens us up to interaction with the spirit world all around us," he says.

Fr. Syquia adds, "Since prevention is always much easier than the cure, I hope through this work to warn Catholics about the different ways that they may get involved with demonic forces which would then create deadly bandages in their lives."

In his book, Fr. Syquia informs the people about the spirit world, the world of the paranormal and the occult...particularly the realm of extraordinary demonic activity. He said this is to help people know how to properly view and confront the evil spirits through the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Fr. Syquia quotes Pope John Paul II who said during a visit to the Sanctuary of Saint Michael the archangel on May 24, 1987: "The last battle against the devil, which is the principal task of Saint Michael the archangel, is still being fought today because the devil is still alive and active in the world."

"When demonic activity is not as grave," Fr. Syquia writes, "one can be himself find oneself under through the different spiritual weapons that God has given the Church to destroy the works of Satan." Thus, the book teaches Catholics the different sacramentals used by the Church to counteract demonic oppressions.

"One must keep in mind that the devil is afraid of the Christian who knows his identity as a precious child of the all powerful God and knows also how to use the many spiritual weapons of the Church," Syquia writes.

Included in this gripping book of drama is the Exorcism Rite...the main weapon of the Catholic Church against demonic assaults, a concise manual of prayers for deliverance, as well as a handbook for dealing with infested houses.

Fr. Syquia points out in his book that vacations and deliverance falls under the Ministry to the Sick. He adds: "This

The book contains accounts of demonic possession

results a program that encompasses not merely diagnostic procedures and the exorcism/deliverance itself, but must also include follow-ups and evaluations."

According to Bo Sánchez, chairman of EWTN the book will change the way one views the world. "In the end," Sánchez says, "Fr. Joss' mind-blowing stories will not make you fear the devil as much as they will make you love God more."

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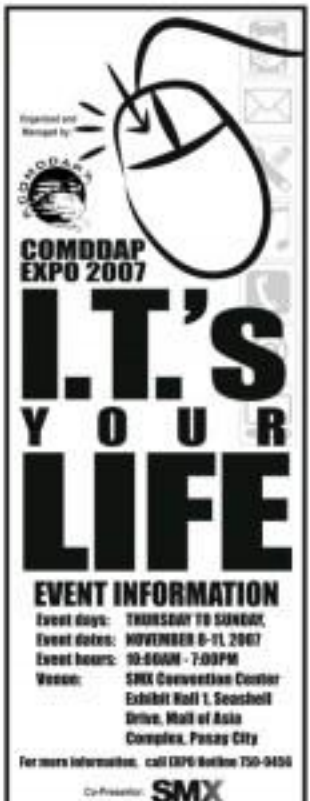


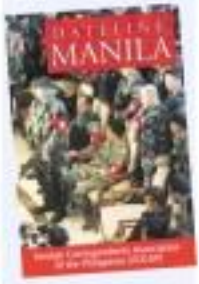
Books on foreign reportage, Maria Kalaw Katigbak

ANVIL PUBLISHING, INC. WILL launch two new books this week.

"Tandem Manila," by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap), will be launched today 6 p.m., at the Ayala Museum in Makati City. The inaugural of the Teodoro Benigno Memorial Lecture will precede the launch at 4 p.m.: a talk on "Media in the 'Time of Terror'" by Tony Hartley of the Al Jazeerah in Asia/Pacific.

Another new book is Momma Al Jazzy Morados's "Maita Kalaw Katigbak: A Charmed Life," a biography which attempts to chew Philippine

history through the eyes of former senator Maria Kalaw Katigbak. It is one of those inevitable features of a life laden with a noble genealogy, beauty, intellectual prowess, and a charmed destiny. The launch will be co-hosted by the Old Swiss Inn 5:30 p.m. tomorrow at the Swiss Inn Makati.



ENTERTAINMENT

Lito Zulueta G. Velarde

mobile news

Lolit's Piolo-Sam exposé may be hearsay

I CERTAINLY BELIEVE IT WHEN A GROOM Mr. insider told me that Tita Lolit Solis wasn't really in Sofitel and it was only a friend who told her about the alleged Piolo-Sam nightstay. "Pinamidgan na lang si Lolit. Pightist ever. Wala along instrument. Nagbiruwalt lang ng chair yung neighbormo sa Korea kaya nagkajuju-gulo na," revealed my source. Name is, La Lolita has been through it. We can only watch in bewilderment what she will do next.

Supportive wives

Geraldine Cruz Ilustrisimo and Lucy Torres-Gomez both remain unperturbed by talk that they confided each other at a show biz party recently.

"Di naman kami mga hain si Lucy at he admitted by whatever nanawarded to me then is because of my husbands," Hilma said. "I waived to Lucy at the party Mahina naman ako sa[illegible] pa sa table nila para hamon.

Before the party nagbulungan na kami ni sa phone. It's sad that some people make it seem na antipatika ako na di humuri kay Lucy. I really like Lucy. I even told her that she's an angel."

The whole conflict between Hilma and Bidoy started during their unsuccessful bid in the Pilar elections. In the heat of campaign time, they had each other uncomfortably. To make matters worse, there was miscommunication between their camps. It came off "snarling ahoka."

As Hilma put it, "Bidoy and Sonia are both good at what they do (kaya siguro they clash)." Discussing Bidoy and Gloria is for such greenhorns. I'm sure they will patch things up in no time. "All I can say is that in the words of idle minds," said Lucy. "Hilma and I both want what's best for our husbands. We wouldn't rather keep what we talked about in private. It's more sincere that way."

With supportive wives like Hilma and Lucy, power can't be too far behind for Bidoy and Sonia.

Kind mare

At a campaign sortie in Barangay New Cuenca (Mandaluyong) during the SK elections, residents told me how kind Emma, Angel Locsin's mare, is. "Where the media found out that Emma owns here, no animals interview ups. After that happened, Angel took her away to shield her from the press. Angel has always helped her mom out even if they live apart."

In between shows, Angel is an ideal daughter. Now she's all set to be a proud actress again via her much-awaited telenovela "Lobo" with Piolo Pascual. She will premiere a PM in a Fashion house and PJ's role is a soldier. Her "Maalaala Mo Kaya" episode with Sam Milby clobbered the rival show.

That's just a season of greater things to come for Angel as she embarks on a new chapter in her life at the Kapamilya network.

Beyonce live

Prepare for some heart-thumpin' action as the prince-meets-female Beyonce Knowles rocks the hearts of Pinoys at the much-awaited "Beyonce Superstar-Live in Taguig 2007," presented by Globe and MTV on Nov. 7 at the Bonifacio Global City Open Field.

Chill to Beyonce's cup of dee-elastic hits like "Crazy In Love" and "Baby Boy." After rising to fame with Destiny's Child, Beyonce earned recognition with the group for their excellent stage performance and award-winning songs. When she went solo in 2003, she continued her own winning streak as her album "Dangerously in Love" debuted at No. 1 on the US and UK album charts.

Tickets are at P5,500, P2,500 and P800. For ticket inquiries, call 891-0999.

Beyonce will definitely take you to unsuspected heights and beyond!

Horror spoof

Get Alvin Yapan's "Parokya," which opens

EYEWITNESS? Lolit Sola (above) claims to have seen with her two eyes Sam Milby and Piolo Pascual (left) at the poolside cabana shop of Richard Sobol, but a show biz insider reveals otherwise.

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

RAKE

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

DID YOU KNOW...

Entertainment highlights during the week of Nov. 4-10:

1951: Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner were married. She filed for divorce in 1954.

1960: Brad McCuen, who supposedly was killed in a car crash, according to the "Dead is Dead" hoax that circulated in 1969.

1970: Elton John released his "Greatest Hits" album.

1984: Prince founded his Purple Rain tour in Detroit.

1998: "Tattoos With Wolves," starring Nicole Coulter, opened in US.

2006: Britney Spears filed for divorce from Kevin Federline. They had been married for just over two years, and she had given birth to their second son just two months earlier.

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1 RENDITION • TRX
2 HALLOWEEN
3 BALLS of FURY
4 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
5 HIDE and SEEK
6 30 DAYS of NIGHT
7 UNREST / STARDUST
8 MANILA PRIDE FEST
9 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
10 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising

ERMITA

1 HIDE and SEEK
2 RESIDENT EVIL 3 / THE SEEKER
3 BALLS of FURY
4 30 DAYS of NIGHT
5 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
6 RENDITION / UNREST
7 HALLOWEEN

METRO EAST

1 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
2 30 DAYS of NIGHT
3 HIDE and SEEK
4 HALLOWEEN
5 UNREST
6 BALLS of FURY
7 RESIDENT EVIL 3
8 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview

NOVALICHES

1 HALLOWEEN
2 30 DAYS of NIGHT
3 BALLS of FURY
4 HIDE and SEEK
5 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview

PIONEER

1 HALLOWEEN
2 30 DAYS of NIGHT
3 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
4 BALLS of FURY

STA. ROSA / LIPA

1 HALLOWEEN
2 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
3 HIGHLANDER
4 HIDE and SEEK
1 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
2 HIDE and SEEK
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 STARDUST
5 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview

DASMARIÑAS / IMUS

1 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
2 HIGHLANDER
3 HALLOWEEN
4 HIDE and SEEK
1 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
2 HIDE and SEEK
3 HALLOWEEN
4 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT

ANGELES / TARLAC

1 HALLOWEEN
2 KUNG FU FIGHTER
3 HIDE and SEEK
4 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 DON'T LOOK BACK
3 SHOOT 'EM UP

STAMMILLS

1 KUNG FU FIGHTER
2 HALLOWEEN
3 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview
4 HIDE and SEEK
5 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL
6 RESIDENT EVIL 3

BACOLOD / ILOILO

1 SHOOT 'EM UP
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1 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
2 HIDE and SEEK
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 STARDUST
5 MRS. WOODCOCK
6 SUPERBAD Sneak Preview

F3 ENTERTA

Thin sports parod

NEW YORK—YOU, WITH SCRIPTS OF badminton drama, hickball glory and ball-dynamite tragedy Harry to Hollywood.

From 2004's "Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story" to this year's "Blades of Glory" (a comedy of ineffably sports-movie cliches being churned out, four "Balls of Fury," the new ping-pong romp, may signify the twilight of the trend.

There's no Phil Streeb here, no Ben Stiller. But, there's Dan Fogler, a Tony winner for Broadway's "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee."

Written by "Team 9/11" co-creators Thomas Lennon and Ben Garant (who also directed) "Balls of Fury" may be conventional fare to most athletarians, but there is a semi-real, fresh comedy about Fogler.

With long, thick curly hair, pointy mutton chops and pretty hands for his fast-talking screwzone who accidentally wandered into a sports set, designed, and decided to play along.

Fogler plays Randy Daytona, a former ping-pong prodigy haunted by his loss in the 1988 Olympics. Now washed-up, he's performing table tennis tricks at a Nevada casino. "I got introduced by a contortionist," he explains.

Besides wearing fishtail Pompadour, a dad in cool Leopard Velour, the costume of ex-prodigies.

Because of his "magic skills," Randy is asked upon his FBI agent (Terry Crews) to infiltrate the lair of a criminal mind: the ping-pong losing Swag (Dan Walker).

Daytona must find improve his skills so that he is ready to face his most dangerous tournament. He wants to avenge his brother's murder. Wong (Dong), who disappears early in the movie, the game so "He is like a fire, a phenomenon. It takes years to learn how to

By teaching a white person, Wong risks humiliation from Chen "soul, his ancestors, teenage cunning.

It's this kind of "Naked Gun" silliness that is the best of "Balls of Fun."

Once Daytona straightens his training and proves himself to be overcoming Dragon Lee. It goes on, goes crazy with ugly Brazilian stereotypes, entertainment with the energy of a Pi "quirky puzzle."

It should come as a surprise to no

y with a few slapstick smarts

Holden is well suited to playing a disturbed play-acting enthusiast. He gives his poems satisfactorily low deepens by blinking down "brother," the eyes—in his trademark pre-humiliation—that his extravagant lid is "too much, but it's homey," and confesses he has no idea how to care for his pistols: "I'm not really sure what they eat."

In the main event, a number of ridiculous disruptions of play-acting converge, most notably Daymond's rival, the German Karl Wolf, whose clumsiness. Those scenes, like many in the film, are somewhere in comedy's sweet.

(bl) Knight in a scene from "Balls of Fury"

REVIEW

Knowing detectable likewise outta and a holding, pass-flexing giant with a nail match.

Here and elsewhere, "Balls of Fury" re-vents on "Masks" like cartoon stories, jokes-less action sequences and as much double entendre as it can manage.

That may sound fine to some, but for others, it overshadows the movie's smarter slapstick surprises.

Once she stands a finished and "Balls of Fury" loosens the cue magic to a rendition of Def Leppard's "Pour Some Sugar on Me," joining in the mediation of the coordinators of films like "There's Something About Mary" and "The 40 Year-Old Virgin."

But the movie hasn't earned such an encore-and yuckle again reminded of the film's copious grunts.

Still and sport strips if you can, the greatest end here be right. —Jake Coyle, AP

erry Seinfeld returns with the animated 'Bee Movie'

...JERRY SEINFELD • CHRIS ROCK...

...the TV show" like it was just another sitcom...

...ly familiar terms from his past.

...time, wasn't that TV show "Seinfeld"? One of the ...

Seinfeld, it seems, has moved on more than most ...his audiences. Though "the TV show" ended in the...ork run in 1998, the perpetual glow of "Seinfeld" ...ter forms steadily maintained. Interviews in star and ...ommender has remained largely out of sight... (like his beloved Superman) noting in his first two of Seinfeld.

The 53-year-old comedian is releasing "Bee Movie," a film which began as a recent pun made ...ers dinner with Steven Spielberg. A call was then ...ckard to Jeffrey Katzenberg, CEO of Dreamworks ...nimation SKG, and the small joke eventually ...olled into a $150 million (Seinfeldian) which Seinfeld ...ays spent more than three years writing, producing ...d starring the main character.

Return to stand-up comedy

Seinfeld, of course, hasn't been doing nothing since "Seinfeld." He and wife Jessica were married in 1999 and have since had three children. Seinfeld's interest has presumably been to invest in being a stand-up comedian; his subsequent work as lauded a straw act that appeared in the 2000 film "Comedian."

But that documentary grossed less than $3 million in limited release. Tens of thousands have seen Seinfeld in comedy clubs across the country—sometimes ...ng nonpublicist deeds of restaurant (yearly earnings of ...0 million, including $40 million for "Seinfeld" ...chisers, according to Forbes).

For years Katzenberg pitched movie roles to Seinfeld, who had numerous opportunities to star in films ...e role did Seinfeld consider "Bee Movie" his first major ...ce "Seinfeld" project?

"The very simple difference: This was his idea," says Katzenberg. "If you look at Jerry's work, his ...ce was always about doing things he understood."

Katzenberg adds: "Jerry has his own rhythms and ...ccent interests."

Like the bees depicted in "Bee Movie," Seinfeld seems to relishing to what you do best, and for him, that's observational comedy. Despite he's energized and refined over decades, he would rather ...ear the seating to the pros. "Time Seinfeld is available, ...to-rock," he jokes.

Lolit's . . .

...Nov. 28, will be a laugh-...loud "farm-off" between ...rovely twosome Al Ali (he has ...s and Shaffie Mae Quatrano, ...a squad of star fans affirm ...ur flock "Ewkoh."

...d photo that back-feathers (as ...Rose while Steffie Mae is ...'s favorite Jersey Bean-...y female switch doesn't ...y book decide to get mar-...d. At days was riding she ...ured from Hoochy while ...ooking to not to dwell on the ...e. The two somewhatmore ...ns two insurrection towards ...h others.

...Short on long negotiable fea-...ng necessarily or slim kibbutz ...d Peachy) as either," it says in ...

...the finale her starting man ...ames Squakenda were "Rose ...atures so she from farting ...younger men," it says, ...ghing "Stubs so she sing ...ehoh, offering instructions to ...m. Karen takes on after Chevy ...ronnie to making people ...gh, though, she will never ...ender.

...I will watch highchairbang's ...ftalkies.com.

Sid the kid

He's more than just Mark Gil's son

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

Sid Lucero with Iza Calzado, his co-star in "Banaue"

WITH ASTONISHING candor, Sid Lucero admits he "fell in love" with the role of Joara Banoza, his co-star in Adolf Alix and Dave Hukom's "Banaue."

"I saw the rushes and thought Joara was perfect for the part. Iza Calzado's Ivatan husband, I'm also a Batanes guy. It would've been weird if I were cast in that role."

Although he already played the lead in Adolf Alix's "Damsel," he welcomed tackling a supporting role in "Banaue."

"Who should I mind not being the lead?" He is genuinely perplexed. "I'm just glad that I'm on board. I usually consider myself lucky to censor my work load wasn't that heavy and I get to enjoy myself on the island."

He did a little sightseeing on nearby island Sabtang. "The huge waves provided our love scenes' fishing boat."

While co-stars Gloria de Castro and Dante Rivero were hollering to heaven, Sid, like Batanenes host star Ken Chu, played it cool.

"I thought it was exciting," Sid recalls.

After his 12-day stay in Batanes, his friends in Manila pointed out that "I looked younger dear [upon my return]. It's because I was a stress-free trip."

He dips his hat in Ken. "He's incredible. We talked a lot about sports. He's a 1st dan champ while I'm zero boxing," he notes.

Ken the writer

Ken also helped fine-tune the Manchurio lines of dialogue in the script of the new series "Huwag Po Kayo." Sid is working on.

"He took the script with him and translated and rewrote the lines. He made it shorter and simpler. He told me that he had worked on the script until five in the morning," Sid recounts.

"Batanes" is Sid's third movie with Adolf—after the Cinemalaya entry "Damsel" and the Cinema One movie "Tumbalina."

[Cinema One runs from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 at the Trinoma and Glorietta.]

"Ate Ramona ran my acting," Sid says of Adolf.

At first, Sid thought his "Tumbalina" character Pablo was too much of a departure.

"He's a hard-core bum who talks in street slang. Very rowdy and noisy," the actor points out. "It was hard, but Direk Adolf was there to guide us. Especially since TV acting is different from movie acting. I had to tone it down for the movies."

Although he has yet to act in a mainstream film, Sid is a true movie baby.

He got his screen name from Andrew Muhli Gil's character in the Mike de Leon film "Sister Stella L."

"My dad said more [Bing Pimentel] met on the set of that movie. I was made in that movie," he says.

He first saw "Batch '81" in film class in college.

"I'm very proud that my parents are part of a movie that's being studied in school," he asserts. "But the sad part is that we seldom get to see movies like that now. That's why film festivals like Cinemalaya, Cinema One and Cinemanila should be commended."

For Cinemalaya movies, Mutah (for "Rcrumbs") and Sid (for "Donsol") were nominated Best Actor in this year's Urian. Dilaab tied with Rustom Padilla for the honor.)

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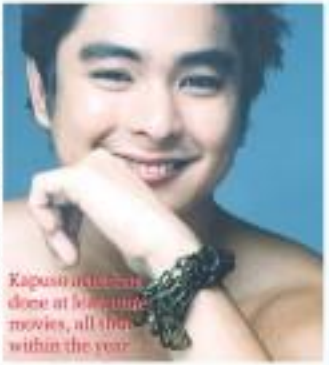
Coco festival

By Bayani San Diego Jr.



ANYONE WHO STILL COMplains that the local film industry is dying should talk to actor Coco Martin who appears in at least nine movies, all shot within the year.

It's a veritable Coco festival.

As opening salvo, Noel "Bahay" Sin's "Kasal Sa Hotel" is premiering on Nov. 7—via be followed by Adolf Alix's "Tumbalina," Jason Mendoza's "Tirador," Rico "Suso," Rahyan Carlos' "Pisong Yagit," Joyce Bernal's "Box Of Fire" episode in "Sine Showing," Martin Cabreza's "Condo," Celso Ad. Castillo's "OFW" and Alix's "Batanes."

"Tumbalina" is part of the Cinema One digital film fest, running from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 at the Trinoma and Glorietta. "Batanes" is set to have a commercial run on Dec. 5.

By January next year, he is headlining Marlon Cabreros's "Coco Jo," an entry in the Pinoy Indie Film fest of new directors.

Coincidental

Coco, who has just signed up as a member of the Kapuso mole group Studio, is also slated to appear in GMA Films' Valentine presentation, as well as in Joselito Altarejos' new movie under Viva.

If you ask Coco, this mindfull is just "coincidental." To think that he almost gave up on the biz and moved to Canada after his controversial one year in Sunrise Boulevard's "Maalaala Mo."

Now that he's back, he promises to pull out all the stops. Case in point: He didn't think twice about auditioning for "Tumbalina."

"When I like about him is that he really wants to develop his craft," says Adolf. "He's willing to experiment with his roles and he has no qualms whether the part and/or budget is big or small."

After "Tumbalina," Adolf hired him in two more films, "Hari" and "Batanes."

"In 'Hari,' I play a gay serving soldier in 'Batanes' as an Ivatan and the best friend of Iza Calzado's husband (portrayed by Joem Bascon)," notes Coco, who took acting lessons under "Huwag Tuparin" director Jerrold Tarog.

He says that his "Tumbalina" director Adolf also guided him in his portrayal of Billy—Jiro Manio's coed/friend brother.

Acting shift

"At first time I was doing the [GMA 7 afternoon soap 'Daisy Siyete'], so Direk Adolf asked me to shift from TV to movie acting," Coco recounts.

"It's not that I look down on TV acting, it's just that the rule had different requirements. In the end, Coco got the character's essence," says Adolf.

Acting teacher Bobyan says it has Coco "feels the role and moves, eats and speaks like the character he/she is."

"Huwag Tuparin" co-star Cherry De Peralta says that, at first, she thought Coco was "too baby-faced" to play her lover. "But he pulled it off convincers. He's super to learn and has a good aesthetic."

In each new movie, Coco takes pain to make each character distinct.

"For variety, I make it a point to change the way I look. If the role requires, I try to lose or gain weight. Or I grow a mustache. For 'Batanes,' I got a tan," he explains. "I prepare for each movie—physically and acting-wise."

ENTERTAINMENT

One night with Beyonce

By Pocholo Concepcion

WHEN FRANCIS LU, exec of MTV Philippines saw Beyonce in concert in San Diego, California recently, he was so convinced that the R&B superstar should bring her act over to Manila.

With a 10-piece, all-female touring band (like another 10 to make dancers), Beyonce's gig on May 7 at the Araneta Coliseum (Ideal City looks like one big theater party).

However, it's a celebration that may not be simply about temporal pleasures.

Beyonce, the 26-year-old former lead singer of the girl group Destiny's Child, has morphed into a symbol of the independent, strong-willed woman who has not necessarily cut off her ties with her parents.

In fact, her father Mathew Knowles is still her manager (and co-producer of her albums), while her mother Tina, who owned a hair salon reborn Beyonce Inc. performed as a child prodigy, has co-named her stylist.

Named after her mother's maiden surname (Beyonce's of Louisiana Creole origin, the Texas-born Beyonce Giselle Knowles won an age seven, already a soloist in church choir and attending dance school.

Destiny's Child was originally a quartet—but Beyonce formed with her childhood friends.

In a span of nine years (up until 2005 when the group disbanded amicably after a world tour), Destiny's Child has become one of the most biggest R&B pop acts of all time with multi-platinum albums and Grammy awards.

5 Grammy awards

Beyonce's own career was no less phenomenal. Her debut solo album in 2003, "Dangerously in Love," won five Grammy awards the following year and has sold 11 million copies worldwide.

The follow-up, "B'Day" was another hot seller and has preceded the ongoing "Beyonce Experience" tour.

The "B'Day" deluxe edition album, available locally in Sony BMG, is a CD/DVD package with

(SEE PAGE G7)

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One night...

From page A1

19 tracks and 12 videos. For the first-time listener, it's a good intro, thanks to Beyoncé's singing and songwriting skills.

For the most part, these songs bounce on an irresistible groove, jump-starting on Beyoncé's vocals, whose range is wider enough to sound smooth and gritty at the same time. Several tracks also feature the obligatory guest spot for other singers, notably fave R&B Jay-Z, who lends his "buccaneer" rap style in two numbers.

Overall, the result is spare, mostly minimal keyboards perfect for an incessant beat bent from what sounds like a dozen mics, yet ingeniously performed because it's mouth and voice Beyoncé's vocals like an inspired session musicians.

But for all its hip-shaking energy, perhaps the most outstanding part in the album is found in two ballads "Unresistible," backed by an electric guitar, is about the pain of being lied to; and "Listen," a tour de force number from Beyoncé's turn star turn in the film "Dreamgirls."

Expect a lot of skin and provocative moves to sync with Beyoncé's music on concert night this Wednesday. But don't ever tip over the voice.

BEYONCE Bonnie

NOW SHOWING AT MARKET! MARKET! CINEMAS

Leonardo DiCaprio

The 11th Hour

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PERFUME

THE STORY OF A MURDERER

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SNEAK

NOVEMBER 6 (Mon.)
NOVEMBER 8 (Tue.)

GLORIETTA 4
GREENBELT 3
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
MARKET! MARKET!
AYALA CENTER CEBU
TRINOMA

Araneta Center

Cinema 1 Araneta Coliseum

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ARANETA COLISEUM

2007 WORLD POOL CHAMPIONSHIP

Al Al Al ... 9 Greatest Performance Of My Life

ARON – LIVE IN MANILA

TEN POOLS PASCUAL LIVE AT THE ARANETA

Significant infusion of reality

MANY MOVIES PRODUCED (SPE) shows these days are fantasy productions. Viewers love watching them because they provide excitement, visual magic and escape, which steward and troubled people feel they need a lot of these days.

That's perfectly understandable, but too many escapist movies can dull or sap the mind and heart. So, we also need some reality-based films to challenge us, cause us to care about the love and save, and to feel strongly for other people in conflict.

Hits off the headline

One such significant infusion of reality is presented by the current film, "Redacted," which takes its story line off the headline, dramatizing the shocking injustice of the torture of suspected terrorists in the US military's desperation to win the war against terror.

What makes the plot of "Redacted" even more shocking is the fact that the suspected "terrorist" and torture victim is an Egyptian national who has a green card, is married to an American (Rosse Witherspoon) and has lived in the States for many years.

He is deprived of all of his rights and made to disappear from the face of the earth, because he's suspected of having sold secret information about US security to a well-known terrorist.

Presenting his innocence, the suspected man is savagely tortured to reduce an inch of his life and sanity — until he breaks down and "confesses."

But the young CIA field operative on top of the case (Adar Gelbenhard) suspects that the prisoner is simply trying to avoid being tortured to death, and eventually sets out on his own mission, sending the entire CIA machinery into a tumult.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

We need reality-based films to challenge us as too many escapist movies can dull or sap the mind and heart

Particularly incensed is the official in charge of the covert rendition process, played by Meryl Streep. But even her anger proves to be no match for the desperate zeal of the prisoner's wife (Witherspoon), a "nobody" who is able to move heaven and earth to save her tortured husband.

'Psychological editing'

What's exceptionally gripping about "Redacted" is its ability to keep all of its diverse elements in play, by way of "psychological editing."

Thus, even as the prisoner is suffering in detention, without hope of surviving his ordeal, his wife is storming the walls and halls of power faced officialdom to secure his release — even as the CIA field operative finds himself wrestling with his conscience — until Kerrey's character delivers her lack of moral compass from an the only way to save those souls of lives.

That's the film's dramatic linchpin, that one man's life is as much worth fighting for as the theoretical thousands saved from suicide terrorist "body" bombs.

The fact that the movie ultimately ends up on the side of the angels makes it an inspiring production, despite all of the pain and bleakness involved.

The icing on the cake is the high level of portrayals turned in by Streep, Gyllenhaal, Witherspoon and the film's other major players. The very realism of their acting ends enables the story's drama and conflict to get you in the gut and make you painfully empathize with its suffering characters, as though it was you who was being viciously tortured in endless to a crime you didn't commit.

'Great Indian Wedding'

DISCOVERY TRAVEL & LIVING BRINGS the beauty and splendor of India in a week-long special starting tonight at 9.

Tonight's feature, "The Great Indian Wedding," explores cities like Udaipur in Rajasthan, Mumbai, Jaisalmer and Prukhar.

It features a personal account of preparations preceding the wedding of Bollywood Vikram Chatwal and model Priya Sachdev.

'Amazing Race'

Newcomers are introduced in the new season of "The Amazing Race 12," which premieres on Studio 23 from 9 a.m. today.

The reality competition brings together 11 teams who will travel 30,000 miles around the world for 30 days.

'The Triumph'

Matthew Perry stars in "The Triumph," a movie based on the real life saga of Stan Clark, the disturbing, ambitious young man who takes on the challenge of teaching in one of New York City's under-funded schools.

In his attempt to instill discipline among his pupils, Stan accidentally fabricates and embellishes.

The movie premieres on Nov. 11 at 10 p.m. on the Hallmark Channel.

CLICK!

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1		2 HALLOWEEN	3 BALLS OF FURY	4 HIDE & SEEK		
GLORIETTA 4	1 DADDY DAY CAMP	2 SUPER BAD	3 BALLS OF FURY				
	4 HALLOWEEN	5	6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	7 RENDITION			
GREENBELT 1	1 HALLOWEEN		2 BALLS OF FURY				
GREENBELT 2	1 SUPER BAD		2 HALLOWEEN				
	3 BALLS OF FURY	4 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	5 DADDY DAY CAMP				
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 BALLS OF FURY		2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT				
	3 HALLOWEEN	4 SUPER BAD	5 STARSHIP TROOPER				
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 HALLOWEEN	2 HIDE & SEEK	3 KUNG FU FIGHTER	4 SUPER BAD			
MARKET! MARKET!	1 HIDE & SEEK		2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT				
	3 SUPER BAD	4 HALLOWEEN	5 BALLS OF FURY				
TRINOMA	1 HIDE & SEEK	2 THE LOBBY	3	4 BALLS OF FURY			
	5 SUPER BAD	6 RENDITION	7 HALLOWEEN				

AT THE MALLS

Glorietta — Historical The Musical — November 7 to 9 · 11.30am, 2pm and 6pm · Activity Center

Greenbelt — The Tasting Room — November 10 to December 31, 2007

Alabang Town Center — "TOWN MOVIES featuring The Moonbloods Live!" — November 10, 6pm · Town Plaza

Ayala Center Cebu — SPI Installment Madness — November 5 to 10, Parents, Interactions and Personality Area

Market! Market! — Home for the Holidays Outlet Sale — November 8 to 8 · Activity Center

Christian's — Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids — August – November 2007

Ayala Museum — 2007 Asian National Academy Art Exhibition – 3rd Asia Biennial & Museum — November 9 to 18, 2007 · Ground Floor

Tri Noma — Rhythm Academy: Rob Ludovica with the UP Jazz Ensemble — November 8, 6pm · Activity Center

HALLOWEEN FILM FESTIVAL

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